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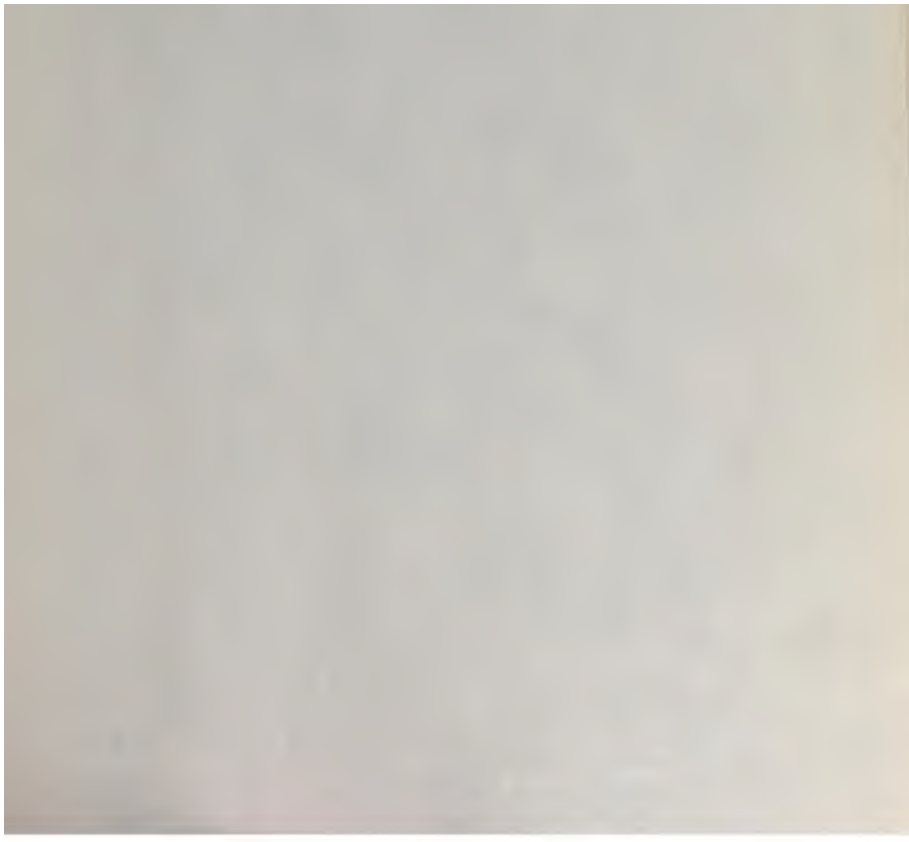

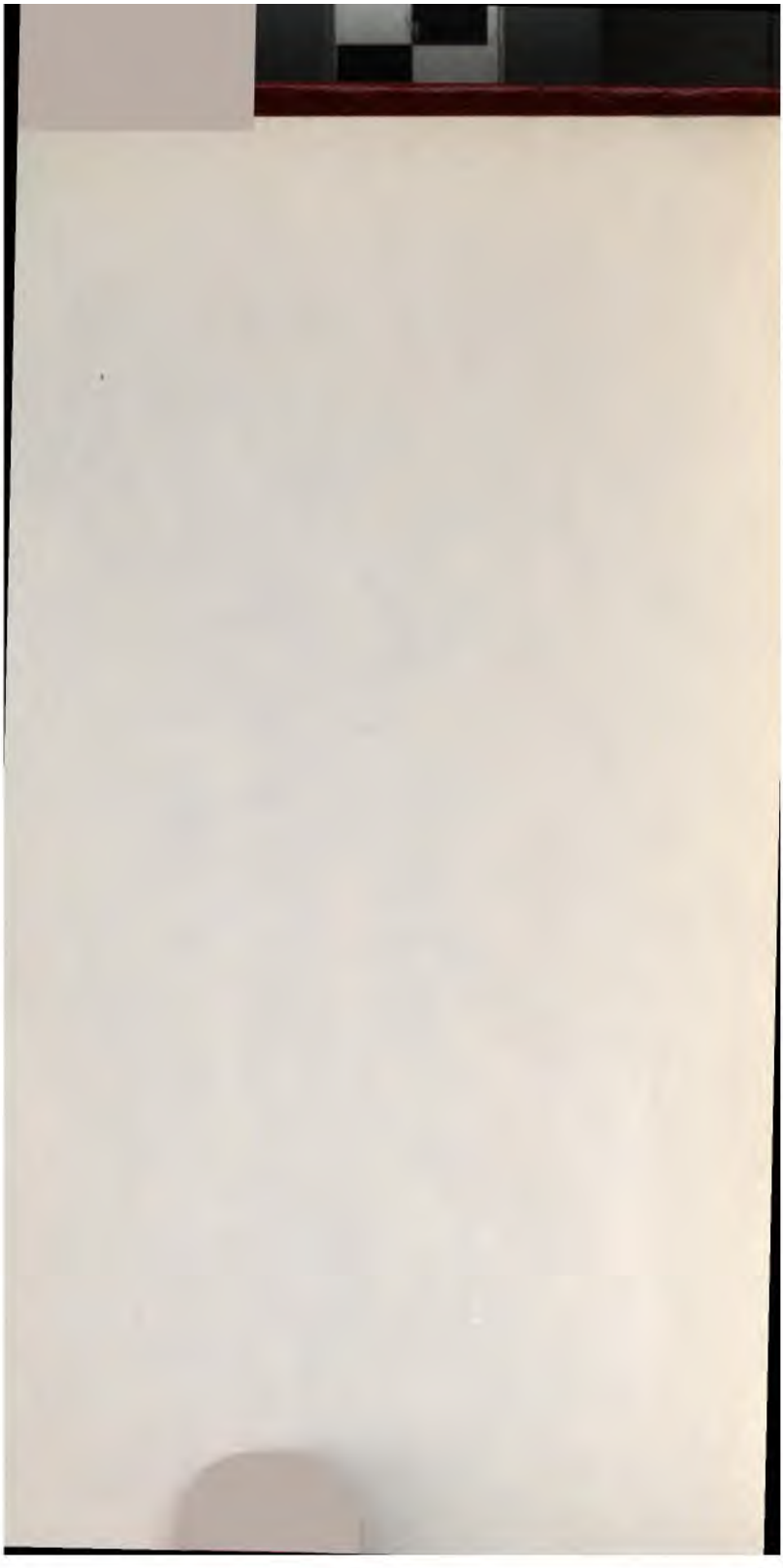

THE WORKS
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FAUST
CLAVIGO
EGMONT
THE WAYWARD LOVER

TRANSLATED BY
SIR THEODORE MARTIN

EDITED BY
NATHAN HASKELL DOLE

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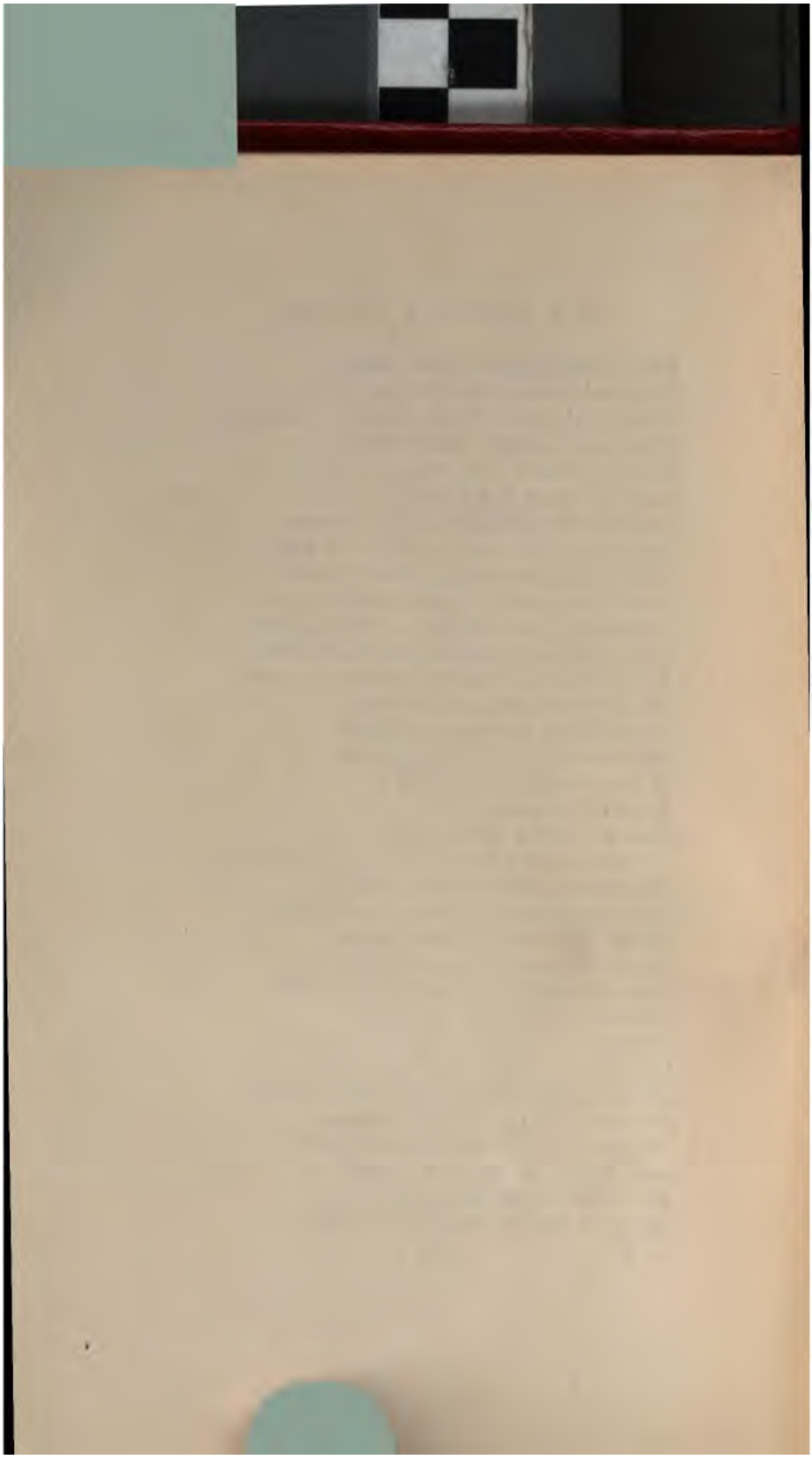
TO J. ANTHONY FROUDE

Dear friend of many years, accept
This book, which into life has crept
In hours that have been snatched from those
Were due to dearly earned repose.
Well do I know how deep and strong
Your reverence is for Goethe's song,
And how the problems, thickly sown
Throughout this book of his, have grown
Familiar to your thought and tongue
As the rare words in which they're sung.
You know — who better? — all that gives
This book its charm, the grace that lives
And breathes throughout its perfect verse,
The saws sarcastic, vivid, terse,
The wild wit flashing to and fro,
The varied lore, the sunny glow
Of fancy and of passion, fit
To glorify the exquisite
Conception of a Helen meet
To make Faust's dream of bliss complete, —
The tender beauty of the thought
That his deliverance should be wrought
By her who could in death forget
The wrong he did her — Margaret,
And twined his soul with hers by love
Eternal, pure, in realms above.
You, too, can measure well how great
His perils are, who would translate
The thoughts on aptest language strung,
And wed them to another tongue.
But you, like all true Masters, will
Look gently on my lack of skill,
And with a large allowance take
My effort for our friendship's sake.



Introduction

WHETHER Goethe should or should not have left his "Faust" a fragment, closing with the death of Margaret, is a question which has occasioned much controversy among his admirers. But there will always be many — and their number is more likely to increase than diminish — who will think that Goethe was himself the best judge of what was right, and that if he considered it essential, as unquestionably he did, to the fulfilment of the scheme on which the First Part of his great dramatic poem was based, that he should give in his own way the solution of the problem how Faust was to be extricated from the toils of the Evil One, into which he had plunged himself in a mood of weariness and despair, it cannot be otherwise than worth the while of literary students to make themselves familiar with what he had to say, whether they are satisfied or not with the way in which the Faust legend is illustrated, and the redemption of its hero is worked out.

It has been too much the habit of English readers to accept the eulogies of the Second Part of the "Faust" at second hand, and to decline to go through the fatigue of reading it with the care which it demands, and so following the destinies of Faust to the close. Nor, perhaps, is this greatly to be wondered at. The scheme of the book, teeming as it does with allusions to science, mythology, history, and art, unfits it for any but a highly educated and patient class of readers. It was avowedly for readers of this class

only that it was written ; and even for them it presents many passages difficult to interpret, many allusions hard to understand, and intricate problems which are not to be resolved without some effort of brain. Commentaries have sprung up, almost as voluminous as those under which the texts of Dante and of Shakespeare have long groaned. These, not a few of them at least, have had the usual result of aggravating the obscurity which they profess to clear away, so that we are thrown back upon the poem itself to gather such meanings and suggestions as our own reason or imagination can help us to. And, after all, these are quite sufficient for the enjoyment of what is really valuable in the poem. Such parts of it as demand the exposition of elaborate commentary, most lovers of poetry will agree, can scarcely deserve one. The moment poetry begins to deal in mysticism or philosophical problems, and to demand elaborate exposition, it ceases to be poetry. A natural instinct impels us to give all such rhymed obscurities the go-by, and to settle upon the flowers about whose fragrance and beauty there can be no mistake.

Of these this work presents an abundance sufficient to satisfy the most exacting taste. But to enjoy it thoroughly, the reader must bring both cultivated intelligence, and sympathy with the poetic faculty in its higher development. Those who want strong human interest must go elsewhere. They will not find it here. The whole action lies within "the limits of the sphere of dream." Even Faust and Mephistopheles are but as phantasms moving among phantasms. The pulses of the fatal passion, which resulted in the tragic ending of poor Margaret, are but poorly compensated by the fine frenzy of Faust for the Helen of antiquity. It is his imagination, not his heart, that is on fire. Ours also kindles before the exquisite painting of the poet, which sets every figure

in his drama before us as vividly as could have been done by the chisel of Phidias or the pencil of Titian. We are grateful for the rich series of pictures which he has passed before our eyes, but they leave no impression on our heart like the ineradicable pang of one such stroke of pathos as Margaret's

> "Bin ich doch noch so jung, so jung!
> Und soll schon sterben!"

Again, for those who seek in the "Faust" a solution of the great problem of life, the result at which Goethe seems to arrive is, we venture to think, neither very startling nor very novel. It is no more than the truth, which wise men of all ages have preached, that by those who aspire beyond the enjoyment of selfish tastes, intellectual or sensual happiness is only to be reached through active beneficence, through the application of knowledge and power to the welfare of mankind. While Faust pored in his study over musty volumes of medicine, jurisprudence, and theology, the accumulation of such knowledge as they taught brought only bitterness of heart, and a feeling that it satisfied none of the higher aspirations of his nature. When Faust, in his old age, takes to reclaiming land from the sea, to building harbours, and making hundreds of his fellow creatures happy, then the cravings of his heart are for the first time satisfied. With the prospect before him of the good to follow from his philanthropic schemes, he sees the moment at hand, which in his study he had not believed could ever come, when he should say to it —

> "Verweile doch! du bist so schön!"

and be content to die. It is not Mephistopheles, but Faust's own internal development, that has wrought

this result; and thus the condition is never fulfilled which entitled Mephistopheles to claim his soul.

Another important but by no means novel truth Goethe may also have meant to enforce. It is one which is tolerably sure to have been reached by every man who has learned to place his happiness in helping toward the happiness of others — namely, that it is not here on earth that the soul can look for satisfaction. In a higher sense than was present to the mind of Ulysses in Tennyson's poem,

> "All experience is an arch, wherethrough
> Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever, as we move."

Problems thicken upon us the more we see, the more we think, the more we feel, of which the solution is not to be found within "this visible diurnal sphere." It is, in truth, only by the hope that these will be solved in that immortal life of which this of earth is but an initial stage, that existence is made endurable to those who suffer, ~~and to those~~ who think. This hope it was which, in the case of Socrates, for example, while it reconciled him to life, robbed death of its terrors, in the assurance that with death came the dawn of a brighter and nobler existence, of which the happiest experiences of this world were but feeble symbols, and in which he should see realised the things for which his soul had yearned on earth in vain. Almost the last words of the present poem point to the same faith, the Chorus Mysticus singing, as Faust is borne into the heavenly sphere —

> "Alles Vergängliche
> Ist nur ein Gleichniss;
> Das Unzulängliche
> Hier wird Ereigniss!"

These lines, and the lines that follow, which tell of a God who cares for the creatures of his hand, and who has prepared for them better things than all that they can ask or think, may, in our opinion, be fairly regarded as indicating the main drift of what Goethe had in view in concluding his version of the Faust legend in the way he did.

If this be so, then it is no doubt satisfactory to have his assent to this view of human life, and of human destiny; but it is no new discovery, and it has been enforced more clearly and emphatically from many familiar quarters.

Looking upon the poem in this light, we quite understand, although we do not share, the feeling expressed by Stieglitz, Lewes, and others, that it would have been better had the ultimate destiny of Faust been left in the uncertainty in which Goethe left it at the end of the First Part with Margaret's

"Heinrich! Mir graut's vor dir,"

and the cry of piteous pathos, "Heinrich! Heinrich!" from

"The voice from within, dying away."

with which the poem closes. This, however, would have been the mere statement of the problem, not the solution of it; and to have left his conception in this unfinished state would have been wholly inconsistent with the poet's purpose as indicated in the Prologue in Heaven, which gives the key-note to the whole composition.

As an artist Goethe could never have been content to leave his work incomplete. Happily, therefore, for those to whom poetry is something more than a mere amusement of the fancy or stimulus of the emotions, he determined to grapple with every detail of the

legend, as it grew through successive stages into a development, which enabled him to call into play all the resources of his imagination and of his consummate literary skill. Thus he gave us in this book some of his finest conceptions, and, beyond all doubt, his most exquisite workmanship. One can bear much that is tedious and obscure, sometimes perhaps even trivial, for the sake of such scenes as that in which Helen and Paris are evoked before the Emperor's Court, the whole of the Classical Walpurgis Night, and the Intermezzo of Helena. The dream of ideal beauty which since Homer's time has been associated with the name of Helen, has given rise to many a fine passage in poetry, of which none perhaps is more vividly remembered than the splendid apostrophe of Marlowe's Faust to

> "The face that launched a thousand ships,
> And burned the topless towers of Ilium."

But Goethe was too deeply penetrated by the idea of that "daughter of the gods, divinely tall, and most divinely fair," to be content with disposing so lightly as Marlowe did of her relation to Faust as he found it indicated in the old legend. Helen is to the Second Part of "Faust" what Margaret was to the First, — the centre upon which its interest turns; and upon this creation Goethe put forth all his powers. The passionate worship of beauty in and for itself kindles the verse wherever Helen appears or is referred to, even as the passion of Pygmalion gave life to the marble he had chiselled into form. The conception of the Helena, as wrought out here, was manifestly in Goethe's mind when he wrote the First Part; for it is clearly a vision of her supreme beauty, and not of Margaret, as the ordinary stage misrepresentations of the "Faust" would have us believe, that is presented

to Faust in the magic mirror of the Witches' Kitchen, when he exclaims:

"What form divine is this, that seems to live
Within this magic glass before mine eyes?
Oh, love, to me thy swiftest pinion give,
And waft me to the region where she lies!

. . . . . .

A woman's form, beyond expression fair!
Can woman be so fair? Or must I deem
In this recumbent form I see revealed
The quintessence of all the heavens can yield?
On earth can aught be found of beauty so supreme?"

All may not agree in admiration of the machinery by which this vision is made a reality, and Helena is brought back from the shades to become the bride of Faustus for a time. But no one can question the admirable skill with which Goethe, by a series of subtle touches, fills the imagination with the full rich beauty, the stately grace, and the resistless charm of her who "brought calamity where'er she came." Whatever the shortcomings of the poem in other respects may be, in all that bears upon this part of it the matured strength of a great artist is everywhere apparent, combined with a freshness and force which, considering the time of life at which it was written, are little less than wonderful.

Who, again, would be content to miss from literature the noble last act of the poem, — the scene, for example, in which Faust is smitten by blindness; or still more, the hymns which accompany his transport to heaven, and the vision of Gretchen, whose own bliss could not be perfected until she saw him, purified from the dross of earth, and accepted as not unworthy of the forgiveness which had been vouchsafed to herself? Only those to whom the original German has become a second language can know how perfect in

feeling and in rhythmical expression these hymns are; but those who have not this advantage may catch some glimpses of their beauty through a translation, although all translation of such work as this must of necessity be more or less a failure.

More than twenty years ago the present translator printed for private circulation a version of the Classical Walpurgis Night, and the Intermezzo of The Helena. Having subsequently translated the First Part of the drama, he naturally wished to complete his self-imposed task. Not till recently has he been able to resume this labour of love. None but an enthusiast for Goethe would, he frankly admits, undertake such a task; and even he, however great his qualifications, must be often tempted to throw down his pen in despair. To reproduce satisfactorily even a few pages of this work would be a crucial effort to the most accomplished translator. In none of Goethe's works are the marvellous beauty and finish of his style carried to a higher point. In many parts the charm lies almost exclusively in the execution; and a translator may well despair of making his readers tolerant of the matter by rivalling the exquisite manner of the original, with all the odds so heavily against him in the much less plastic character of our language as compared with the German. And when Goethe is at his best, he is simply untranslatable. Such as it is, the present version is offered, in the hope that it may assist English readers in the study of what Goethe regarded as the master-work of his life.

Faust

DEDICATION

Ye come, dim forms, as in youth's early day
  Ye blessed these eyes, which now so lonely grieve!
Still, still, to hold ye fast shall I essay,
  Still let my heart to that delusion cleave!
Ye throng me round! Well! lord it how ye may,
  As from the mists ye rise, that round me weave!
Ye waft a magic air, that shakes my breast
With youth's tumultuous, yet divine, unrest.

Visions ye bring with you of happy days,
  And many a dear, dear, shade ascends to view;
Like some faint haunting chime of ancient lays,
  Come love, first love, and friendship back with you.
The heart runs back o'er life's bewildered maze,
  And pangs, long laid to sleep, awake anew,
And name the loved ones lost, — before their day
Swept, whilst life yet was beautiful, away.

Alas, alas! These strains they cannot hear,
  The souls to whom my earliest lays I sang;
Gone is that loving band of friends so dear,
  The echoes hushed, that once responsive rang;
My numbers fall upon the stranger's ear,
  Whose very praise is to my heart a pang,
And all, who in my lays took pride of yore,
Are lost in other lands, or else no more.

And yearnings fill my soul, unwonted long,
To yonder still, sad, spirit-world to go;
Now, like Æolian harp, my faltering song
Rises and falls in fitful cadence low;
A shudder thrills me, as old memories throng,
The strong heart melts, tears fast on tear-drops flow,
What still is mine seems far, far off to be,
And what has vanished lives anew for me.

Prelude at the Theatre

Prelude at the Theatre

MANAGER.

POET OF THE THEATRE. MERRYMAN.

MANAGER.

OLD friends and true, my proved allies
In times of trouble and of need,
Say how you think our enterprise
Will here on German soil succeed.
My aim and chief delight would be
To please the crowd, especially
As "Live and let live" is their creed.
Our booth is up, both wind and water tight,
And all are looking forward to a treat:
Even now they sit, with eyebrows raised, and quite
For marvels primed, to lift them off their feet.
Well know I how to hit the public taste,
Yet ne'er felt so perplexed as now I feel;
'Tis true, they're not accustomed to the best,
But then the rogues have read an awful deal.
How to contrive, then, something fresh and new,
To set them thinking, yet amuse them too?
For, sooth, it glads my heart the crowd to view,
When, setting toward our booth with streamlike rush,
They pour along, wave coursing wave, and through
The narrow doorway elbow, squeeze, and crush:
When in broad day, by three, or even before,
They make a dash at the pay-taker's wicket,
Like starving men, that storm a baker's door
For bread, their ribs imperilling for a ticket.

This miracle on men so various may
The poet only work. Work thou it, friend, to-day!

POET.

Oh, tell me not of yonder motley crew,
Which scares our spirit with its aspect coarse,
Yon surging crowd, oh, veil it from my view,
Which in its eddies drags us down perforce!
No, lead me to some heaven-calm nook, where true
Delight hath for the bard alone its source,
Where love and friendship wake, refine, expand
Our heart's blest blessings with celestial hand.

What there has touched the spirit's inward ear,
And on the lips a trembling echo found,
Uncertain now, now full, perchance, and clear,
Is in the wild world's dizzying tumult drowned.
Oft only after throes of year on year
With perfect form our spirit's dream is crowned;
The showy lives its little hour; the true
To after-times bears rapture ever new.

MERRYMAN.

Truce to this prate of after-times! Were I
Of after-times to babble thus, why, who
With fun would these our present times supply?
Yet fun they will have, and with reason, too.
A jovial presence, readiness, address,
Go far, believe me, to command success.
He that can put what he has got to say
Into the compass of a pleasant piece,
And send his points home well, he, come what may,
Will ne'er be soured by popular caprice.
He wants a large wide public for his sphere;
There burns his genius with a tenfold ardour,
For there, he knows, he's sure to catch their ear,

To move them deeper, and to hit them harder.
Coragio, then, — to work! and let them see
The very type of what a piece should be.
Fancy with all her ministering train, —
Thought, Reason, Feeling, Passion, Melancholy, —
Make these to speak, each in her proper strain,
And last, not least, forget not, mark me, Folly!

MANAGER.

But put, be sure, whatever else you may,
Enough of incident into your play,
Plenty to look at, — that's what people like,
'Tis what they come for; dazzle, then, their eyes
With bustle, plot, spectacle, — things that strike
The multitude with open-mouthed surprise.
"Superb! sublime!" they cry, "what breadth! what power!"
And you become the lion of the hour.
Only by mass can you subdue the masses,
A sop for every taste, for every bent;
He that brings much brings something for all classes,
And everybody quits the house content.
If you're to give a piece, in pieces give it!
With a ragout like that succeed you must.
To serve it up so is quite easy — just
As easy anyhow as to invent it.
In one organic whole though you present it,
Harmonious and compact, it little matters;
The public's sure to tear it into tatters,
Blur every tint, and every joint unrivet.

POET.

You do not feel how all unworthy is
Such vulgar handicraftsman's work as this;
How little consonant with every aim
That spurs the genuine artist on to fame.

Mere paltry patchwork, gaudy, and unreal,
Run up at random by your bungling fool,
Alas! too well, I see, is your ideal,
Approved by choice and justified by rule.

MANAGER.

Rail on! I care not how you thrust.
Whoe'er would work to purpose must
Choose tools that best his purpose fit.
Think what soft wood you have to split,
And only look for whom you write.
One comes to seek a brief respite
From *ennui*, if he can, and vapours;
Another, stupid from a heavy meal,
And, what is worse than all a deal,
Scores fresh from reading magazines and papers.
They rush to us as to a masquerade,
Quite in the cue for dissipation,
And the mere prospect of a new sensation
Wings all their footsteps, man and maid.
The ladies, in their best arrayed,
Think only how to catch the eye,
And with our own performers vie,
Themselves performers, though unpaid.
Your poet-dreams, your soarings high,
Oh, they were there appropriate, very!
Zounds, do you fancy these will ever draw
A bumper house, or make it merry?
Regard your patrons closely. Why,
They're one half cold, the other raw.
One's longing for the play to end,
That he may have his game of cards in quiet,
Another's eager to be off, to spend
The night upon a wench's lap in riot.
Why then, ye simpletons, for such a pack
Put the sweet, gracious Muses on the rack?

I tell you, only give enough to hear and see,
No matter what the quality may be!
And you can never miss your mark. Contrive
To keep folks' curiosity alive,
Their senses stun, and mystify their brains;
To satisfy them's more than man can do.
How! What's amiss? Are these poetic pains,
Or stomach-qualms, that have got hold of you?

POET.

Begone, and seek elsewhere some other man,
Lackey in soul, to work on such a plan!
What! shall the poet fool, at thy behest,
The right away? 'Twere sin if he forsook
His human-heartedness, the noblest, best,
Endowment, which from Nature's hands he took.
By what stirs he all hearts as by a spell,
And makes them quail, or at his will be strong?
By what does he each element compel
To lend some fresh enchantment to his song?
Oh, is it not the harmony that rings
From his full soul with unconstrainèd art,
And, circling round creation's orbit, brings
The whole world back in music to his heart?
When Nature winds her endless threads along
The spindles, heedless how they cross or tangle,
When all created things, a jarring throng,
In chaos intermingling, clash and jangle,
Who parts them, till each living fibre takes
Its ordered place, and moves in rhythmic time,
Who in the general consecration makes
Each unit swell the symphony sublime?
Who links our passions with the tempest's glooms,
Our solemn thoughts with twilight's roseate red,
Who scatters all the springtide's loveliest blooms
Along the path the loved one deigns to tread?
Who of some chance green leaves doth chaplets twine

Of glory for desert in every field,
Assures Olympus, gives the stamp divine?
Man's power immortal in the bard revealed!

MERRYMAN.

To work, then, with these powers so rare,
And ply your task of bard and singer,
As people push a love-affair!
They meet by accident, are smitten, linger,
And get themselves somehow into a tangle;
All's love and bliss, — then comes a tiff, a wrangle,
In heaven one hour, the next, despair, distraction,
And, presto, lo! a whole romance in action!
After this fashion let us, too,
Construct our piece. But see that you
Go straight at all the stir and strife
That agitate our human life;
All have it, but not many know it.
Get hold of it where'er you will,
In all its motley mixture show it,
And it is interesting still.
A medley give of personages, wheeling
'Neath impulses half seen, half hid from view,
With much that's false to nature and to feeling
Mix here and there a spice of something true:
So you a famous beverage compound,
To rouse and edify the house all round.
Then to your play throngs youth's prime flower, intent
To see its future there made clear and plain,
Then tender souls from it seek nourishment,
To feed withal their melancholy vein.
Call up now this, now that, love, hate, mirth, rage, despair,
And all will then behold what in their heart they bear.
They still are of that happy age, when they
Are equally prepared to laugh or weep;

They still can find a pleasure in display,
Still reverence bold imagination's sweep.
He that is past his growth, hard, formal, set,
There's no contenting him, howe'er you sing:
The young, with all their growth before them yet,
Will thank you heartily for all you bring.

POET.

Then give, give me back too the days
When I myself, like them, was growing,
When forth gushed thronging lays on lays,
As from a fountain ever flowing;
When to my wondering eyes the world,
As in a veil of mist, was set,
And every bud gave promise yet
Of marvels in its leaves upcurled;
When swiftly sped the happy hours,
As, roaming like a summer gale,
I plucked at will the thousand flowers
That blossomed thick through every vale.
Nought had I then, yet had in sooth
Such wealth as nothing could enhance,
The thirst unquenchable for truth,
The blest delusions of romance.
Give each bold impulse back to me,
The deep wild joy that thrilled like pain,
The might of hate, love's ecstasy,
Give me my youth again!

MERRYMAN.

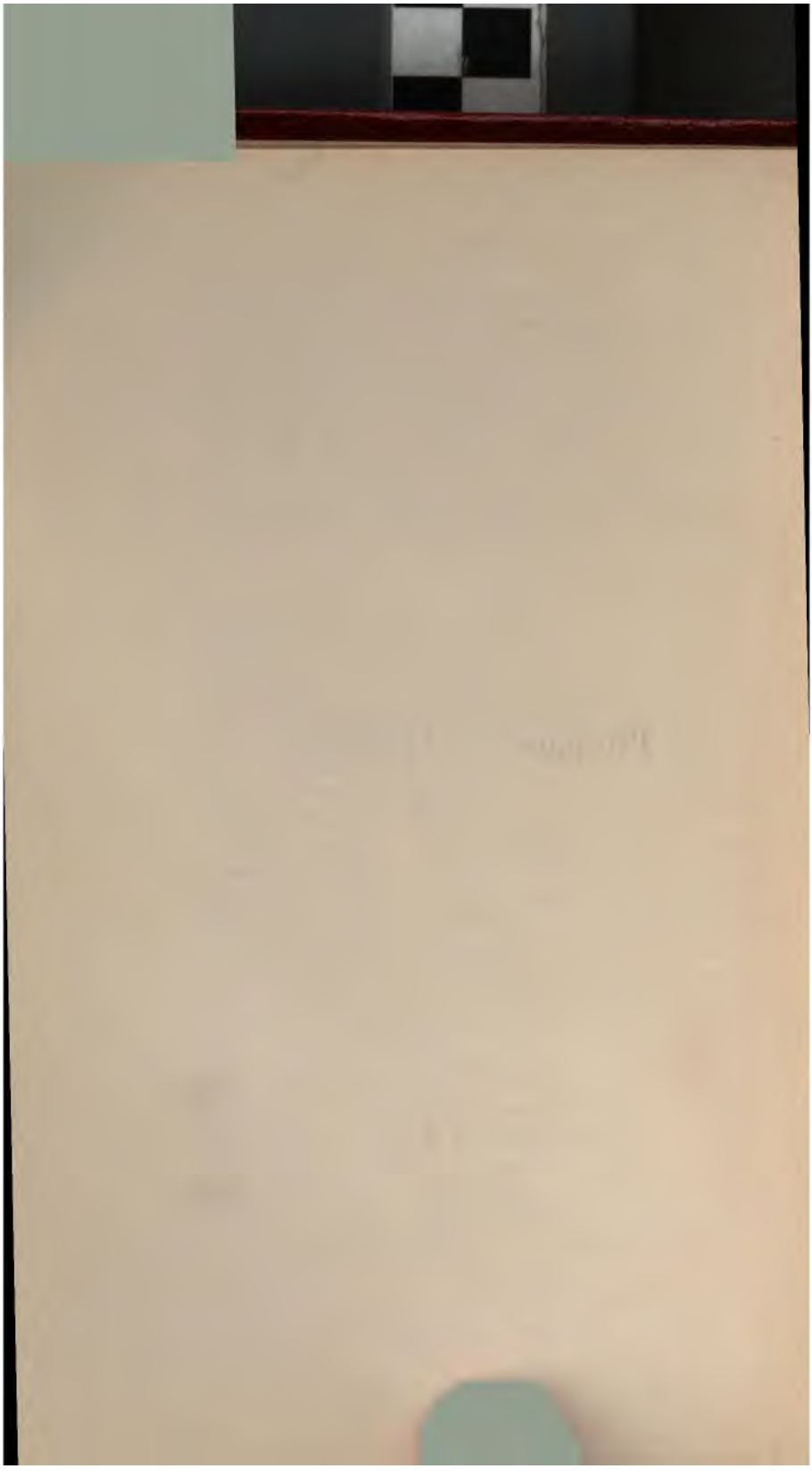
Of youth, good friend, you would have need, no doubt,
If foes on battle-plain were round you pressing,
If some fond wench had flung her arms about
Your neck, and plied you hard with her caressing;
If from a far-off goal, nigh out of sight,
The wreath, for him that wins the prize, were blinking,

If, after dancing madly half the night,
You settled down to spend the rest in drinking;
But on the lyre's familiar strings to lay
Your grasp with masterful, yet sweet control,
And, there meandering gracefully, to stray
On to your shining self-appointed goal, —
This the vocation is of you old fellows,
Nor do we therefore prize you less, my friend.
Age does not make men childish, as folks tell us,
It only finds them children to the end.

MANAGER.

Enough of talk! At all events,
I fain would see you up and doing:
While you are turning compliments,
Something to purpose might be brewing.
Why speak of waiting for the mood?
Wait, and 'twill never come at all!
You set up for a poet, — good!
Then hold your poetry at call.
You know the article we want, —
A drink strong, sharp, and stimulant, —
So get to work, and brew away!
Full well we wot, and to our sorrow,
That what's not set about to-day
Is never finished on the morrow.
No man of sense will waste in such
Delays one day, one single hour;
No, he will by the forelock clutch
Whatever lies within his power;
Stick fast to it, and neither shirk,
Nor from his enterprise be thrust,
But, having once begun to work,
Go working on, because he must.
On German stages one expects,
You know, vagaries wild and daring,
So of mechanical effects,

Prologue in Heaven



Prologue in Heaven

THE LORD. THE HEAVENLY HOSTS. *Afterward* MEPHISTOPHELES.

THE THREE ARCHANGELS *come forward.*

RAPHAEL.

THE sun in chorus, as of old,
With brother spheres is sounding still,
And, on its thunderous orbit rolled,
Doth its appointed course fulfil.
The angels, as they gaze, grow strong,
Though fathom it they never may;
These works sublime, untouched by wrong,
Are bright as on the primal day.

GABRIEL.

And swift, beyond conceiving swift,
The earth is wheeling onward; mark!
From dark to light its surface shift,
From brightest light to deepest dark!
In foam the sea's broad billows leap,
And lash the rocks with giant force,
And rock and billow onward sweep
With sun and stars in endless course.

MICHAEL.

And battling storms are raging high
From shore to sea, from sea to shore,

And radiate currents, as they fly,
That quicken earth through every pore.
There blasting lightnings scatter fear,
And thunders peal; but here they lay
Their terrors down, and, Lord, revere
The gentle going of Thy day.

THE THREE.

The angels, as they gaze, grow strong,
Yet fathom Thee they never may;
And all Thy works, untouched by wrong,
Are bright as on the primal day.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Since Thou, O Lord, amongst us com'st once more,
To ask how things are getting forward here,
And Thou hast commonly been kind before,
I at thy levee with the rest appear.
I can't talk grandly, not though these fine folks
Should all upon my homeliness cry scorn;
My pathos surely would Thy mirth provoke,
If Thou hadst not all merriment forsworn.
Of sun and worlds I nothing have to say;
I only see how mortals fume and fret.
The world's small god retains his old stamp yet,
And is as queer as on the primal day.
He had been better off, hadst Thou not some
Faint gleam of heavenly light into him put;
Reason he calls it, and doth yet become
More brutish through it than the veriest brute.
He seems to me, if I my thought may state,
One of those grasshoppers, with legs ell-long,
That flies and leaps, and flies again, and straight
Down in the grass is piping its old song!
If to the grass he kept, his grief were less,
But he will thrust his nose in every dirty mess!

THE LORD.

Hast thou, then, nothing else to say but this?
Comest thou ever, only to complain?
Art thou with nothing upon earth content?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No, Lord! I find things there, as ever, much amiss.
Men and their troubles cause me genuine pain;
Not even I would the poor souls torment.

THE LORD.

Dost thou know Faust?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What! Doctor Faust?

THE LORD.

My servant.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thy servant? Well, his service may be fervent,
But it is surely of the strangest kind.
Not upon earth, the fool! is he
Content his food or drink to find;
Craving for what can never be,
Yet scarce to his own madness blind,
He would be soaring far and free,
In hopes to clutch Immensity.
From heaven he asks its fairest star,
From earth its every chief delight,
Yet all that's near, and all that's far,
Although they lay within his might,
Would never yield the looked-for zest,
Nor still the torturing tumult of his breast.

THE LORD.

Though now he serve me stumblingly, the hour
Is nigh when I shall lead him into light.
When the tree buds, the gardener knows that flower
And fruit will make the coming seasons bright.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What will you wager? If you only let
Me lead him without hindrance my own way,
I'll answer for it, you shall lose him yet!

THE LORD.

So long as on the earth he lives, you may
Your snares for him and fascinations set:
Man, while his struggle lasts, is prone to stray.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

For this you have my thanks; for I protest
That with dead men I never cared to deal;
Plump, rosy cheeks are what I like the best.
When corpses call, I'm out; for, sooth, I feel,
Like cats with mice, 'tis life that gives the zest.

THE LORD.

Enough, 'tis granted! From the source where he
His being had, this spirit turn aside,
And lead him, if thou'rt able, down with thee,
Along thy way, that pleasant is and wide;
And stand abashed, when thou art forced to own,
A good man, in the darkness and dismay
Of powers that fail, and purposes o'erthrown,
May still be conscious of the proper way.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Good! But at rest the point will soon be set;
I'm not at all alarmed about my bet.

If I should win, and crow too loudly, you
Will not amiss my little triumph take?
Dust shall he eat, ay, and with relish, too,
Like that old cousin of mine, the famous snake.

THE LORD.

As to this, also, thou art wholly free;
Hate have I never felt for such as thee!
Among the spirits that deny,
The scoffer doth offend me least of all.
Who may on man's activity rely?
Into indulgent ease 'tis apt to fall.
Whatever his beginnings, soon he grows
To yearn for unconditional repose;
And therefore am I always glad to yoke
In fellowship with him a comrade who
Is ever ready to incite, provoke,
And must, as devil, be stirring, such as you.

But, ye true sons of heaven, rejoice to share
The wealth exuberant of all that's fair,
Which lives, and has its being everywhere!
And the creative essence which surrounds,
And lives all-wheres, and worketh evermore,
Encompass you within love's gracious bounds;
And all the world of things which flit before
The gaze, in seeming fitful and obscure,
Do ye in lasting thoughts embody and secure!

[*Heaven closes; the* ARCHANGELS *disperse.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*alone*).

The Old One now and then I like to see,
And not to break with him take special heed.
'Tis very good of such a great grandee
To be so civil to me, 'tis indeed.

Faust

A Tragedy

Faust: A Tragedy

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *Night.*

A lofty, vaulted, narrow, Gothic chamber — FAUST *seated at his desk.*

FAUST.

ALL that philosophy can teach,
The craft of lawyer and of leech,
I've mastered, ah! and sweated through
Theology's dreary deserts, too;
Yet here, poor fool! for all my lore,
I stand no wiser than before.
They call me magister, save the mark!
Doctor, withal! and these ten years I
Have been leading my pupils a dance in the dark,
Up hill, down dale, through wet and through dry —
And yet, that nothing can ever be
By mortals known, too well I see!
This is burning the heart clean out of me.
More brains have I than all the tribe
Of doctor, magister, parson, and scribe.
From doubts and scruples my soul is free;
Nor hell nor devil has terrors for me:
But just for this I am dispossessed
Of all that gives pleasure to life and zest.
I can't even juggle myself to own

There is any one thing to be truly known,
Or aught to be taught in science or arts,
To better mankind and to turn their hearts.
Besides, I have neither land nor pence,
Nor worldly honour nor influence.
A dog in my case would scorn to live!
So myself to magic I've vowed to give,
And see, if through spirit's might and tongue
The heart from some mysteries cannot be wrung;
If I cannot escape from the bitter woe
Of babbling of things that I do not know,
And get to the root of those secret powers
Which hold together this world of ours,
The sources and centres of force explore,
And chaffer and dabble in words no more.

Oh, broad bright moon, if this might be
The last of the nights of agony,
The countless midnights, these weary eyes
Have from this desk here watched thee rise!
Then, sad-eyed friend, thy wistful looks
Shone in upon me o'er paper and books;
But oh! might I wander, in thy dear light,
O'er the trackless slopes of some mountain height,
Round mountain caverns with spirits sail,
Or float o'er the meads in thy hazes pale;
And, freed from the fumes of a fruitless lore,
Bathe in thy dews, and be whole once more!

Ah me! am I penned in this dungeon still?
Accursèd doghole, clammy and chill!
Where heaven's own blessèd light must pass,
Shorn of its rays, through the painted glass,
Narrowed and cumbered by piles of books,
That are gnawed by worms and grimed with dust,
And which, with its smoke-stained paper, looks
Swathed to the roof in a dingy rust;

Stuck round with phials, and chests untold,
With instruments littered, and lumbered with old,
Crazy, ancestral household ware —
This is your world! A world most rare!

And yet can you wonder why your soul
Is numbed within your breast, and why
A dead, dull anguish makes your whole
Life's pulses falter, and ebb, and die?
How should it be but so? Instead
Of the living nature, whereinto
God has created man, things dead
And drear alone encompass you —
Smoke, litter, dust, the skeletons
Of birds and beasts, and dead men's bones!

Up, up! Away to the champaign free!
And this mysterious volume, writ
By Nostradamus' self, is it
Not guide and counsel enough for thee?
Then wilt thou learn by what control
The stars within their orbits roll,
And if thou wilt let boon Nature be
The guide and monitress to thee,
Thy soul shall expand with tenfold force,
As spirit with spirit holds discourse.
Dull poring, think not, that can here
Expound these holy signs to thee!
Ye spirits, ye are hovering near,
If ye can hear me, answer me!

[*Throws open the book, and discovers the sign of the Macrocosm.*

Ha! as it meets my gaze, what rapture, gushing
Through all my senses, mounts into my brain!
Youth's ecstasy divine, I feel it rushing,
Like quickening fire, through every nerve and vein!
Was it a god who chronicled these signs,

Which all the war within me still,
The aching heart with sweetness fill,
And to mine eyes, in clearest lines,
Unveil all Nature's powers as with a mystic thrill?
Am I a god? All grows so bright.
In these pure outlines I behold
Nature at work before my soul unrolled.
Now can I read the sage's saw aright:
"Not barred to man the world of spirits is;
Thy sense is shut, thy heart is dead!
Up, student, lave, — nor dread the bliss, —
Thy earthly breast in the morning-red!"
[*Gazes intently at the sign.*
Into one whole how all things blend,
One in the other working, living!
What powers celestial, lo! ascend, descend,
Each unto each the golden pitchers giving!
And, wafting blessings from their wings,
From heaven through farthest earth career,
While through the universal sphere
One universal concord rings!

Oh, what a show! yet but a show! Ah me!
Where, boundless Nature, shall I clutch at thee?
Ye breasts, where are ye? Ye perennial springs
Of life, whereon hang heaven and earth,
Whereto the blighted bosom clings,
Ye gush, ye slake all thirst, yet I pine on in dearth!
[*Turns the leaves of the book angrily, and sees the sign of the Earth Spirit.*
How differently I feel before this sign!
Earth Spirit, thou to me art nearer;
My faculties grow loftier, clearer,
Even now I glow as with new wine.
Courage I feel, into the world to roam,
To bid earth's joys and sorrows hail,
'Mid storm and struggle to make my home,

And in the crash of shipwreck not to quail.
Clouds gather o'er my head;
The moon conceals her light,
The lamp's gone out. The air
Grows thick and close! Red flashes play
Around me. From the vaulted roof
A shuddering horror creeps
And on me lays its gripe!
Spirit by me invoked, I feel
Thou'rt hovering near, — thou art, thou art!
Unveil thyself!
Ha! What a tugging at my heart!
Stirred through their depths, my senses reel
With passions new and strange! I feel
My heart is thine, thine wholly! Hear!
Thou must! ay, though it cost my life, thou must appear!

[*Seizes the book, and utters the sign of the Spirit mysteriously. A red light flashes, in which the Spirit appears.*

SPIRIT.

Who calls on me?

FAUST (*turning away*).

Dread vision gaunt!

SPIRIT.

By potent art thou'st dragged me here;
Thou'st long been sucking at my sphere,
And now —

FAUST.

I loathe thee. Hence, avaunt!

SPIRIT.

To view me were thy prayer and choice,
To see my face, to hear my voice.
Well! by thy potent prayer won o'er,
I come. And thou, that wouldst be more
Than mortal, having thy behest,
Art with a craven fear possessed!
Where is thy pride of soul? Where now the breast
Which in itself a universe created,
Sustained and fostered, — which dilated
With giant throes of rapture, in the hope
As peer with spirits such as me to cope?
Where art thou, Faust, whose summons rang so wide,
Who stormed my haunts, and would not be denied?
Is this thing thou? This, my mere breath doth make
Through every nerve and fibre quake?
A crawling, cowering, timorous worm?

FAUST.

Thou film of flame, art thou a thing to fear?
I am, I am that Faust! I am thy peer!

SPIRIT.

In the currents of Life, in Action's storm,
I wander and I wave;
Everywhere I be!
Birth and the grave,
An infinite sea,
A web ever growing,
A life ever glowing;
Thus at Time's whizzing loom I spin,
And weave the living vesture that God is mantled in!

FAUST.

Thou busy Spirit, who dost sweep
From sphere to sphere, from deep to deep,

Ranging the world from end to end,
How near akin I feel to thee!

SPIRIT.

Thou'rt like the Spirit, thou dost comprehend,
But not like me' [*Vanishes.*

FAUST.

But not like thee!
Whom, then? What! I,
The image of the Deity!
Yet not to be compared to thee? [*A knock.*

O death! My Famulus! At time like this
To drag me from the top of bliss!
That such a soulless driveller should
Disturb this vision's full beatitude!

Enter WAGNER, *in his dressing-gown and nightcap, with a lamp in his hand.* FAUST *turns away impatiently.*

WAGNER.

I heard you, did I not, declaim?
From one, no doubt, of the old Greek plays?
So in the art to take a hint I came;
For it is much in favour nowadays.
Many a time I've heard it said, at least,
An actor might give lessons to a priest.

FAUST.

Yes, if the priest an actor be,
As now and then will happen, certainly.

WAGNER.

Ah! when one's in his study pent, like me,
And sees the world but on a rare occasion,

And then far off, on some chance holiday,
And through a telescope, as one may say,
How can one ever hope to sway,
Or govern it by eloquent persuasion?

FAUST.

That is a power, which is not to be taught.
It must be felt, must gush forth from within,
And, rising to the lips in words unsought,
The hearts of all to deep emotion win.
Sit on for ever! Till you ache,
Your patchwork and mosaics make;
With scraps at others' banquets found
A ragout of your own compound,
And, blowing at your ash-heap, fan
What miserable flame you can!
Children and apes may praise your art —
A noble triumph, you must own —
But you will never make heart throb with heart,
Unless your own heart first has struck the tone.

WAGNER.

Delivery makes the orator's success.
In that I'm far behind, I must confess.

FAUST.

Scorn such success! Play thou an honest game!
Be no mere empty tinkling fool!
True sense and reason reach their aim
With little help from art or rule.
Be earnest! Then what need to seek
The words that best your meaning speak?
Oh, your orations, garnished, trimmed, refined,
Tickling men's fancies where they're chiefly weak,
Are unrefreshing as the drizzling wind,
That through the autumn's sere leaves whistles bleak.

WAGNER.

Ah me! art is so long, and life so brief!
Oft in my labours critical, a load
Seems weighing on my brain and heart, like lead.
How hard it is, almost beyond belief,
To get at knowledge in its fountainhead!
And ere a man is half-way on the road,
He's very sure, poor devil, to be dead.

FAUST.

Is parchment, then, the sacred fount can give
The stream that shall allay thy thirst for ever?
Man never quaffed a draught restorative,
That from his own soul welled not — never, never!

WAGNER.

Excuse me, surely 'tis a joy sublime,
To realise the spirit of a time,
To see how sages long ago have thought,
And the high pass to which things nowadays are brought.

FAUST.

High pass! Oh, yes! As the welkin high!
My friend, to us they are, these times gone by,
A book with seven seals, and what you call
The spirit of the times, I've long suspected,
Is but the spirit of the men — that's all —
In which the times they prate of are reflected.
And that's a sight, God wot, so poor, so mean,
We run away from it, as soon as seen;
Mere scraps of odds and ends, old crazy lumber,
In dust-bins only fit to rot and slumber;
At best a play on stilts, all strut and glare,
Gewgaws and glitter, fustian and pretence,

With maxims strewn of sage pragmatic air,
That, mouthed by puppets, pass with fools for sense.

WAGNER.

Ay, but the world! The heart and soul of man,
Something of these may, sure, be learned by all.

FAUST.

As men call learning, yes, no doubt, it can!
But who the child by its right name will call?
The few, who something of that knowledge learned,
And were not wise enough a guard to keep
On their full hearts, but to the people showed
The reaches of their soaring thoughts, the deep
Emotions that within them glowed,
Men at all times have crucified and burned.[1]
I prithee, friend, 'tis far into the night,
And for the present we must say adieu!

WAGNER.

I'd gladly watch till dawn, for the delight
Of such most edifying talk with you.
To-morrow, being Easter-day,
Good sir, if I so far might task you,
Some things there are, which I should like to say,
Some further questions I should like to ask you;
My zeal has in my studies not been small;
Much, it is true, I know, but I would fain know all.
[*Exit.*

FAUST.

Strange, that all hope has not long since been blighted
In one content on such mere chaff to feed,

[1] Whenever a great soul gives utterance to its thoughts, there also is Golgotha. — HEINE.

Who digs for treasure with a miser's greed,
And, if he finds a muck-worm, is delighted!

Dare such a thing as this to babble now,
When all around with spirit-life is teeming?
Yet ah, I thank thee, though the sorriest thou
Of all that tread the earth in mortal seeming.
Thou rescuedst me from the despair that fast
Was wildering my brain with mad surmise.
Ah, yonder vision was so giant-vast,
I shrank before it to a pigmy's size.

I, God's own image, I, who deemed I stood
With truth eternal full within my gaze,
And, of this earthly husk divested, viewed
In deep contentment heaven's effulgent blaze;
I, more than cherub, whose free powers, methought,
Did all the veins of nature permeate,
I, who — so potently my fancy wrought —
Conceived that, like a god, I could create,
And in creating taste a bliss supreme,
How must I expiate my frenzied dream?
One word, that smote like thunder on my brain,
Swept me away to nothingness again.

I dared not deem myself for thee a peer;
Though to evoke thee I the power possessed,
Yet was I impotent to keep thee here.
Oh, in the rapture of that moment blest
I felt myself so little, yet so great!
But thou didst thrust me back, with cruel scorn,
Upon the sad uncertainties forlorn
Of man's mere mortal state.
Who is to teach me? What shall I
Recoil from? What go widely by?
Yon impulse, passionate, profound,
Shall I obey it, or forswear?

Alas! our way of life is cramped and bound
By what we do, no less than what we're doomed to bear!

Around our spirit's dreams, our noblest, best,
Some base alloy for ever clings and grows;
Once of the good things of this world possessed,
We call a better wealth but lying shows.
The glorious feelings, those that most we prized,
That made indeed our very life of life,
In the world's turmoil and ignoble strife
Are seared and paralysed.

If fancy, for a season flushed with hope,
Through boundless ether soars with wing unchecked,
A little space for her is ample scope.
When in Time's quicksands joy on joy lies wrecked,
Anon creeps care into our nether heart,
And there of secret sorrows breeds great store;
Uneasily she sits, and mopes apart,
Marring our joy and peace; and evermore
Fresh masks she dons, to work us bitter dole.
Turn where we will, she haunts our life,
As house and land, as child and wife,
As fire and flood, as knife and poisoned bowl.

I am not like the gods, too well I feel!
No! Like the worm, that writhes in dust, am I,
Which, as it feeds on dust, the passer-by
Stamps into nothingness beneath his heel.

For what but dust, mere dust, is all,
Which, piled in endless shelf and press,
From floor to roof, contracts this lofty wall?
The trash, all frippery and emptiness,
Which here, in this moth-swarming hole,
Cramps, cabins, and confines my soul?

How shall I e'er discover here
The light and lore for which I yearn?
Is all my poring, year by year
On books by thousands, but to learn
That mortals have been wretched everywhere,
And only one been happy here and there?
What, hollow skull, what means that grin of thine,
But that thy brain was once, like mine, distraught,
Did after truth with rapturous passion pine,
And, while the radiance of the day it sought,
Grew at each step less certain of its way,
And in the twilight went disastrously astray?

Ye instruments, at me ye surely mock,
With cog and wheel, and coil and cylinder!
I at the door of knowledge stood, ye were
The key which should that door for me unlock;
Your wards, I ween, have many a cunning maze,
But yet the bolts ye cannot, cannot raise.
Inscrutable in noonday's blaze,
Nature lets no one tear the veil away,
And what herself she does not choose
Unasked before your soul to lay,
You shall not wrest from her by levers or by screws.

Old lumber, that hast ne'er been used by me,
The reason, and the only, thou art here,
Is that my father worked of yore with thee!
And thou, old roll, hast rotted here and mouldered,
Smeared with the fumes of smoke year after year,
Since first upon this desk the dull lamp smouldered.
Oh, better far, had I with hand profuse
Squandered the little I can call my own,
Than with that little here to sweat and groan!
Would you possess, enjoy and turn to use
What from your sires you have inherited.
What a man owns, but knows not to employ,

A burden is, that weighs on him like lead;
Nought can avail him, nought can he enjoy,
Save what is by the passing moment bred.

Why is my gaze on yonder corner glued?
Yon flask, is it a magnet to my sight?
Why, why is all at once as lovely, bright,
As sudden moonshine in a midnight wood?

All hail, thou priceless phial, which I here
Take from thy shelf with reverential hand!
In thee man's skill and wisdom I revere.
Thou quintessence of all the juices bland,
That drowse the brain with slumber, — abstract thou
Of all most subtle deadly agencies,
Bestow thy grace upon thy master now!
I see thee, and my anguish finds a balm,
I touch thee, and the turmoil turns to calm;
My soul's flood-tide is ebbing by degrees.
A viewless finger beckons me to fleet
To shoreless seas, where never tempest roars,
The glassy flood is shining at my feet,
Another day invites to other shores.

A car of fire, by airy pinions driven,
Flits o'er me: and I stand prepared to flee,
By tracts untrodden, through the wastes of heaven,
Up to new spheres of pure activity.
This life sublime, this godlike rapturous thrill,
Can these by thee, a worm but now, be won?
Yes, so thou turn with a resolvèd will
Thy back on earth, and on its kindly sun!
The gates, most men would slink like cravens by,
Dare thou to burst asunder! Lo, the hour
Is here at hand by deeds to testify
Man's worth can front the gods in all their power;

To gaze unblenching on that murky pit
Where fancy weaves herself an endless doom,
To storm that pass whose narrow gorge is lit
By hell-fires flickering through the ghastly gloom;
Serene, although the risk before thee lay,
Into blank nothingness to melt away!

Then come thou down, pure goblet crystalline,
Out from that time-stained covering of thine,
Where I unmarked for years have let thee rest.
Thou sparkled'st when my grandsire's feasts were crowned,
Lit'st up the smiles of many a sad-browed guest,
As each man to his neighbour passed thee round.
Thy figures, marvels of the artist's craft,
The drinker's task, to tell their tale in rhyme,
And drain thy huge circumference at a draught,
Bring many a night back of my youthful prime.
I shall not pass thee now to comrade boon,
Nor torture my invention to explain
The quaint devices of thy graver's brain.
Here is a juice intoxicates full soon;
Its current brown brims up thy ample bowl.
Now do I pledge this draught, my last best care,
In festive greeting, and with all my soul,
To the day-dawn, shall hail me otherwhere!

[*Raises the goblet to his lips. Pealing of bells, and choral song.*

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Christ is ascended!
Hail the glad token,
True was it spoken,
Sin's fetters are broken,
Man's bondage is ended!

FAUST.

What deepening hum is this, what silver chime
Drags from my lips perforce the cup away?
Ye booming bells, do you proclaim the time
Once more begun of Easter's festal day?
And you, ye pealing choirs, do you the songs
Of consolation and glad tidings chant,
Hymned round the sepulchre by angel throngs,
Pledge of a new and nobler covenant?

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

With myrrh and with aloes
We balmed and we bathed Him,
Loyally, lovingly,
Tenderly swathed Him;
With cerecloth and band
For the grave we arrayed Him;
But oh, He is gone
From the place where we laid Him!

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Christ is ascended!
The love that possessed Him,
The pangs that oppressed Him,
To prove and to test Him,
In triumph have ended!

FAUST.

Ye heavenly strains, potent yet soothing, why
Seek ye out me, a crawler in the dust?
Ring out for men more pliant-souled than I!
The message though I hear, I lack the faith robust.
Faith's darling child is miracle. I must,
I dare not strive to mount to yonder spheres
Whence peal these tidings of great joy to men;

Yet does the strain, familiar to mine ears
From childhood, call me back even now to life again.
Ah, then I felt the kiss of heavenly love
On me in Sabbath's holy calm descending,
The bells rang mystic meanings from above,
A prayer was ecstasy, that seemed unending;
A longing sweet, that would not be controlled,
Drove me through field and wood; and from my eyes
Whilst tears, whose source I could not fathom, rolled,
I felt a great glad world for me arise.
This anthem heralded youth's merriest time,
The gambols of blithe Spring: now memories sweet,
Fraught with the feelings of my childhood's prime,
From the last step decisive stay my feet.
Oh, peal, sweet heavenly anthems, peal as then!
Tears flood mine eyes, earth has her child again.

CHORUS OF DISCIPLES.

He that was buried
On high has ascended;
There lives in glory,
Sublimely attended.
In heaven whilst He reigneth,
For us Who was slain here,
On earth we, His chosen,
To suffer remain here,—
To suffer and languish
Midst pain and annoy;
Lord, in our anguish,
We envy Thy joy.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

From the lap of corruption,
Lo! Christ has ascended!
Rejoice, for the fetters
That bound you are rended!

Praise Him unceasingly,
Love one another,
Break bread together, like
Sister and brother!
Preach the glad tidings
To all who will hear you,
So will the Master be
Evermore near you!

SCENE II. — *Before the Town Gate.*

Promenaders of all kinds pass out.

A PARTY OF MECHANICS.

But why are you turning up the hill?

ANOTHER PARTY.

We for the Jägerhaus are bound.

FIRST PARTY.

We think of sauntering toward the mill.

A MECHANIC.

Best by the Wasserhof go round.

SECOND MECHANIC.

The road there is none of the prettiest.

THE OTHERS.

And where are you for?

THIRD MECHANIC.

I go with the rest.

FOURTH MECHANIC.

Come up to the Burgdorf! That's the place
Where one is sure to find the best of cheer,
The prettiest wenches, and the strongest beer,
And a good jolly row in any case.

FIFTH MECHANIC.

You pestilent scapegrace,
A third time do you want to be well whacked?
I don't half fancy going there; in fact,
I have a perfect horror of the place.

SERVANT GIRL.

I will go back to town, I will, that's flat!

SECOND SERVANT GIRL.

We're sure to find him at the poplars yonder.

FIRST SERVANT GIRL.

And much the better I shall be for that!
By whose side will he walk, I wonder?
Why, yours! And dance with you, and you alone;
So, while you have your frolic, I may moan.

SECOND SERVANT GIRL.

He's sure to have a friend! Ah, come now, do!
He said that Curlylocks was coming, too.

STUDENT.

Zounds, how these strapping girls step out!
Come, brother, come, let's join them for a bout.
A beer that stuns, a pipe that bites,
And a wench in her braws, are my delights.

CITIZEN'S DAUGHTER.

These fine young fellows, look where they go!
'Tis a downright shame, when they might know
The best of company, if they please,
To be running after such drabs as these!

SECOND STUDENT (*to the first*).

Not quite so fast! Behind us, yonder, see,
A brace of wenches rigged out smart and neat!
One lives almost next door to me,
And on the girl I'm very sweet.
For all their looking so demure,
They'll take us with them presently, I'm sure.

FIRST STUDENT.

No, no! all prudes are bores. Quick, come away,
Or we shall let the game slip! 'Tis confessed,
The hand that twirls the mop on Saturday
Fondles on Sunday with peculiar zest.

CITIZEN.

What, our new burgomaster? Nay,
He is a man I cannot bear.
He grows more overbearing every day,
Since he was called into the chair.
And what, pray, does he for the town?
Are things not daily growing worse?
Are we not more and more kept down,
And pulled at more and more in purse?

BEGGAR (*sings*).

Kind sirs, and ladies fair and sweet,
With rosy cheeks and handsome dresses,

Look down upon me, I entreat,
Observe, and lighten my distresses.
In pity listen to my voice!
Free hands make merry hearts and gay;
So make this day, when all rejoice,
To me a very harvest-day.

SECOND CITIZEN.

There's nothing more my heart on Sundays cheers,
Or holidays, than a gossip about war
And warlike rumours, when the peoples far
Away in Turkey all are by the ears.
We by the window stand, toss off our glass,
And down the river watch the painted vessels gliding;
Then home at evening merrily we pass,
And bless the comforts of a peace abiding.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Ay, neighbour, nor care I what lengths they go.
Zounds, they may cleave each other's pates, they may,
And turn the whole world topsy-turvy, so
They leave things here at home to jog on the old way.

OLD WOMAN (*to the Citizen's Daughters*).

Heyday! How smart! The pretty dears! Who'd not
Be fairly smitten, now, that met you?
You needn't be so haughty, though, God wot!
What you desire I know the way to get you.

CITIZEN'S DAUGHTER.

Come, Agatha! I'd rather not be seen to greet
A witch like this upon the public street;
But on Saint Andrew's Eve she let me see
In flesh and blood my lover that's to be.

THE OTHER.

Mine, too, she showed me in the glass,
A soldier, one of a dare-devil set;
Here, there, all wheres I seek him, but, alas!
I have not come across him yet.

SOLDIERS (*sing*).

Towns, with loud defiance sent
Down from tower and battlement;
Maidens, rosy as the morn,
Flashing round them looks of scorn,
These alike for us have charms,
Sound alike the cry, "To arms!"
When such glorious prizes call us,
Death nor danger can appal us.

When we hear the trumpets blow,
On to death or bliss we go!
What is like the soldier's trade?
What can match such escalade?
Forted towns and maidens tender
Must alike to us surrender.
When such glorious prizes call us,
Death nor danger can appal us.

CHORUS.

Maids or widows may be sighing,
On we march with colours flying!

FAUST.

Freed from the ice are river and rill
By the quickening glance of the gracious Spring;
Green with promise are valley and hill.
Old winter, palsied and shivering,
Back has crept to his mountains bleak,
And sends from them, as he flies appalled,

Showers of impotent hail, to streak
The fields that are green as emerald.
But the sun no shimmer of whiteness brooks;
The earth is through all her pores alive,
Budding and bursting, and all things strive
To enliven with colours their winterly looks;
And the landscape, though bare of flowers, makes cheer
With people dressed out in their holiday gear.
Turn round, and from this height look down
Over the vineyards upon the town!
A motley medley is making its way
Out from the murky wide-mouthed gate.
Blithely they bask in the sun to-day.
The Saviour's rising they celebrate,
For they have risen themselves, I ween;
From the close, damp rooms of their hovels mean,
From the bonds of business, and labour, and care,
From the gables and roofs that oppress them there,
From the stifling closeness of street and lane,
From the churches' gloom-inspiring night,
They all have emerged into the light.
But, see, how they are spreading amain
Across the gardens and fields, and how
The river, as far as the eye can note,
Is all alive with shallop and boat!
And look! the last departing now,
Laden so deeply it scarce can float.
Far up on the hills as the pathways run,
Gay dresses are glistering in the sun.
Hark now the din of the village! Here
Is the people's true heaven. With hearty glee,
Little and great, how they shout and cheer!
Here I am man, here such dare be.

WAGNER.

To walk about with you, sir doctor, so
Is honour, yea, and profit. Still, were I alone,

I would not here be loitering thus, I own,
Seeing of all that's coarse I am the foe.
Your fiddling, shouting, skittle-playing, all
Are noises which I loathe and quite resent.
These creatures rave, as if the devil drove, and call
Their riot song, forsooth, and merriment.

PEASANTS UNDER THE LINDEN TREE.

Dance and Song.

The shepherd for the dance was dressed;
All tricked out in his Sunday best,
With ribbons gay and sightly.
Thronged round the linden lass and lad,
And all were dancing there like mad,
Huzza! huzza!
Hip! hip! huzza!
The fiddle-bow went sprightly.

Into the thick of them he paced,
And clipped a damsel round the waist,
His arms about her bending;
The buxom wench turned round and said,
"You stupid oaf, where were you bred?"
Huzza! huzza!
Hip! hip! huzza!
"Your manners, sir, want mending!"

But faster grew the fun, and right
And left they wheeled; it was a sight
To see the kirtles flying!
And they grew red, and they grew warm,
And then they rested, arm in arm,
Huzza! huzza!
Hip! hip! huzza!
Such panting, and such sighing!

"Hold off your saucy hands! You men
Are all deceit and falsehood when
You find a girl undoubting."
But he coaxed her, and she stepped aside,
While from the linden echoed wide,
Huzza! huzza!
Hip! hip! huzza!
The fiddling and the shouting.

OLD PEASANT.

Sir doctor, this is kind of you,
To think no scorn of us to-day;
And you such a grand scholar too,
To mix with simple folks this way!
Here, take this jug, 'tis handsome ware,
Nor is the liquor of the worst,
I pledge you in it, with the prayer,
It may not only quench your thirst,
But that each drop within it may
Add to your life another day!

FAUST.

Right gladly I obey your call,
And drink, with thanks, good health to all!
[*The people gather round him in a circle.*

OLD PEASANT.

Indeed this is most kindly done,
To mingle in our mirth to-day.
Ah, sir, you stood our friend in times
When we were anything but gay.
There's many a hale man standing here,
Your father rescued from the clutch
Of raging fever, when he stayed
The plague that wasted us so much.

Though but a lad, from house to house
You sought the sick and dying too:
They bore out many stark and stiff,
But nothing ever ailed with you.
Your trials many were and sore,
You bore them with a spirit brave,
And the great Saviour of us all
Saved him that lent a hand to save.

ALL.

Health to the trusty friend, and may
He live to help us many a day!

FAUST.

To Him above be homage paid,
Who only counsel can, or aid!

[*Walks on with* WAGNER.

WAGNER.

What must you feel, to think, illustrious man,
This crowd reveres you with a love so deep?
Oh, happy, who from his endowments can
So fair a harvest of advantage reap!
The father points you to his son,
The people whisper, crowd, and run,
The fiddle stops, and lad and lass
Break up the dance midway to stare;
They stand in rows for you to pass,
Their caps fly up into the air;
Upon their knees they dropped, almost
As though it were the passing of the Host.

FAUST.

Some few steps farther, up to yonder stone!
Here will we rest, and taste the evening air:

Ofttimes I sat here, wrapt in thought, alone,
And racked myself with fasting and with prayer.
Brimmed full with hope, in faith unwavering,
By tears and sighs and beatings of the breast
From the great Lord of Heaven I sought to wring
Cessation of that devastating pest.
Like mockery now rings yonder crowd's applause.
Oh, could you look into my soul, and read
How little worthy son or father was
Of such repute as they to us decreed!
My father was a good man, not too bright,
Who, by strange notions of his own deluded,
In all good faith, with patience infinite,
On Nature and her sacred circles brooded;
Who shut himself with his adepts away
In a laboratory, black, grim, and mystic,
And fused and fused, by rule and recipe,
Things that by nature are antagonistic.
The Lion Red, bold wooer, bolder mate,
In tepid bath was to the Lily married,
And both were then by open fire-flame straight
From one bride-chamber to another harried.
Thus in due time the Youthful Queen, inside
The glass retort, in motley colours hovered:
This was the medicine; the patients died,
And no one thought of asking who recovered.
So 'mongst these hills and vales our hell-broths wrought
More havoc, brought more victims to the grave,
By many, than the pestilence had brought.
To thousands I myself the poison gave:
They pined and perished; I live on, to hear
Their reckless murderers' praises far and near.

WAGNER.

But why let this distress you, — why?
Can any honest man do more

Than conscientiously to ply
His craft as by its masters plied before?
If you, as youth, revere your father, you
Of course accept from him what he can teach;
If you, as man, see farther, wider too,
Your son in turn a higher mark may reach.

FAUST.

O happy he who still can hope
Out of this sea of error to arise!
We long to use what lies beyond our scope,
Yet cannot use even what within it lies.
But let us not, by saddening thoughts like these,
The blessing of this happy hour o'errun.
See, how they gleam, the green-girt cottages,
Fired by the radiance of the evening sun!
It slopes, it sets. Day wanes. On with a bound
It speeds, and lo! a new world is alive!
O God, for wings to lift me from the ground,
Onward, still onward, after it to strive!
Beneath me, I should see, as on I pressed,
The hushed world ever bathed in evening's beams,
Each mountain-top on fire, each vale at rest,
The silver brook flow into golden streams.
Nor peak nor mountain-chasm should then defeat
My onward course, so godlike and so free.
Lo, with its bays all winking in the heat,
Bursts on my wonder-smitten eyes the sea!
But now the god appears about to sink!
Fresh impulse stirs me, not to be confined.
I hurry on, his deathless light to drink,
The day before me, and the night behind,
The heavens above me, and the waves below.
A lovely dream! Meanwhile, the sun his face
Has hid. Ah, with the spirit's wings will no
Corporeal wings so readily keep pace!

Yet is the yearning with us all inborn,
Upwards and onwards to be struggling still,
When over us we hear the lark, at morn,
Lost in the sky, her quivering carol trill;
When o'er the mountains' pine-clad summits drear
The eagle wheels afar on outstretched wing,
When over flat and over mere
The crane is homewards labouring.

WAGNER.

I too have often had my whims and moods,
But never was by such an impulse stirred.
A man soon looks his fill at fields and woods;
The wings I ne'er shall envy of a bird.
How differently the spirit's pure delights
Waft us from book to book, from page to page!
They give a beauty to the winter's nights,
A cheerful glow that can its chill assuage.
And some fine manuscript when you unroll,
Ah, then all heaven descends into your soul!

FAUST.

One only aspiration thou hast known,
Oh, never seek to know the other, never!
Two souls, alas! within my bosom throne,
That each from other fiercely longs to sever.
One, with a passionate love that never tires,
Cleaves as with cramps of steel to things of earth,
The other upwards through earth's mists aspires
To kindred regions of a loftier worth.
Oh, in the air if spirits be,
That float 'twixt earth and heaven, and lord it there,
Then from your golden haze descend, and me
Far hence to fields of new existence bear!
Yes, if a magic mantle were but mine,
To stranger lands to waft me at my call,

I'd prize it more than robes of costliest shine,
I would not change it for a monarch's pall.

WAGNER.

The too familiar throng invoke not, who,
In trailing vapours spread upon the wind,
Come trooping from all quarters, where they brew
Unnumbered plagues and perils for mankind.
The sharp-fanged spirits of the North, lo, they
Come rushing down on you with arrowy tongues;
Those of the East, they parch you dry as hay,
And suck a slow nutrition from your lungs.
If from the desert sands the South sends out
Those that heap fire on fire around your brain,
The West brings those that first refresh, no doubt,
But end with drowning you, and field, and plain.
They watch our every word, on mischief bent,
Obey each wish, yet turn them all awry,
They look as if from heaven expressly sent,
And lisp like very angels when they lie.
But let us go! the earth is wrapt in gray;
The air grows chill, the mists are falling.
'Tis evening makes us prize our homes. But, hey!
Why stare you thus, as at some sight appalling?
What in the dusk there fills you with such trouble?

FAUST.

Seest thou yon black dog coursing through the stubble?

WAGNER.

I saw him long ago, but heeded not the least.

FAUST.

Observe him well! For what tak'st thou the beast?

WAGNER.

Why, for a poodle, trying to hark back,
In doglike wise, upon his master's track.

FAUST.

See how he doth in spiral circles make
A circuit round us, wheeling nigh and nigher!
And after him — it can be no mistake —
There follows, as he runs, a trail of fire.

WAGNER.

Nought but a coal-black poodle can I see;
It must some optical illusion be.

FAUST.

To me it seems, that round our feet he draws
Fine magic toils to snare us, fast and faster.

WAGNER.

Round us he runs perplexed and shy, because
He sees two strangers here, and not his master.

FAUST.

The circle narrows. He touches us almost.

WAGNER.

'Tis a mere dog, you see, and not a ghost.
He growls, hangs back, lies down, begins to whine,
Waggles his tail — all practices canine.

FAUST.

Here, go along with us! Come hither, come!

WAGNER.

A merry beast it is, and frolicsome.
Stand still, and he sits up and begs,
Speak to him, and he jumps upon your legs;
Lose anything, he'll find it for you quick,
And leap into the water for your stick.

FAUST.

Thou'rt right! I find not of a spirit here
One single trace: 'tis training all, that's clear.

WAGNER.

The dog, if well brought up, may be
Even for the sage good company:
Your favour, possibly your thanks,
He certainly deserves to earn;
The students, sir, have taught him all these pranks,
Which he has shown much aptitude to learn.
[*They pass in at the gate of the town.*

SCENE III. — FAUST'S *Study.*

FAUST (*entering with the poodle*).

Meadow I've left, and dale and hill,
In night's deep gloom arrayed, that wakes
Within us, with a solemn thrill,
The mood which most of heaven partakes:
Each wild desire is lulled to rest,
That rent the heart, or racked the brow;
The love of man now fires the breast,
The love of God is kindling now.

Peace, dog, be quiet! Your restlessness wearies!
Why sniff you so at the threshold there?

Down, sir, behind the stove! See, here is
The best of my cushions, to make you a lair.
We did not object to your coursing and leaping,
It served to amuse us up there on the hill,
But if you are to remain in my keeping,
You must learn, like a well-mannered guest, to be still.

Ah! when within our narrow room
The friendly lamp again is lit,
Then from our spirit flies the gloom
That dulled and overshadowed it.
Reason begins once more to speak,
And Hope again to plume her wings;
After life's streams we pant, yea, seek
The very fountain whence it springs.

Cease, dog, to growl! The brutish sound
Jars with the hallowed tones that all
My soul at this sweet hour enthral!
We think it not strange, when men around
Deride the things they comprehend not,
And all that is fairest and best contemn,
For how should such things their vile natures offend not?
Would the hound be snarling at these, like them?

But ah! I feel, strive as I may, that peace
Will well forth from my bosom nevermore.
Yet, wherefore should its streams so quickly cease,
And we lie parched and panting as before?
So oft have I been doomed thus low to fall.
Yet for this want we may have compensation;
We learn to prize the supernatural,
And cry with yearning hearts for Revelation,
Which nowhere burns more worthily and clear,
Than all through the New Testament. So here

I turn me to the primal text, elate
With a wild longing, line for line,
The great original divine
Into my own dear German to translate.
[*Opens the volume, and prepares to write.*
"In the Beginning was the Word!" 'Tis writ.
Here on the threshold I must pause, perforce;
And who will help me onwards in my course?
No, by no possibility is't fit
I should the naked Word so highly rate.
Some other way must I the words translate,
If by the Spirit rightly I be taught.
"In the Beginning was the Sense!" 'Tis writ.
The first line ponder well. Is it
The Sense, which is of each created thing
The primal cause, and regulating spring?
It should stand thus: "In the Beginning was
The Force!" Yet even as I write, I pause.
A something warns me, this will not content me.
Lo! help is from the Spirit sent me!
I see my way; with lightning speed
The meaning flashes on my sight,
And with assured conviction thus I write:
"In the Beginning was the Deed!"

My chamber if you wish to share,
This howling, poodle, straight forbear,
This barking, and this riot!
To brook a comrade so unquiet
Is more than I am able.
Here both of us cannot remain,
And, though it goes against my grain
To be inhospitable,
There is the door, and you are free
To go! But what is this I see?
How can such transformation be?
Is it a real thing, or throws

Some glamour over me its spells?
How long and broad my poodle grows!
It rises, it dilates and swells.
This is no dog: what can it be,
This fiend I have brought home with me?
Now with his fiery eyes, and rows
On rows of horrid teeth, he shows
Like any hippopotamus!
Ha! Now I know you! Is it thus?
For such half-hell-begotten brood
The seal of Solomon is good.

SPIRITS (*in the passage outside*).

One we know well
Is caught fast within there.
Mind what you're doing,
No one go in there!
An old lynx of hell,
Like a fox in a gin, there
Is quaking and stewing.
Have a care! Have a care!
Unseen, through the air,
Flit ye and hover,
To and fro, round about,
Now under, now over,
And he will get out!

Aid him all, if aid ye may.
He has done us ere to-day
Pleasures manifold and rare!
Help him, then, in his despair!

FAUST.

To grapple with the monster, I
The Spell of the Four at first will try.

Salamander, he shall glow,
Into streams Undine flow,
Vanish Sylph, and, Kobold, double
Shall his turmoil be and trouble!

If a man know not the lore
Of the Elemental Four,
The power of each and property,
Of the world of spirits he
Never will the master be.

Hence, as ye came, in flash and flame,
Salamander!
Flow out and be seen a rushing stream
Undine!
Blaze on the air a meteor fair,
Sylph!
Us with timely help befriend,
Incubus! Incubus!
Come forth, come forth, and make an end!

No one of the Four is lodged in the beast.
'Tis plain, I have not touched the case.
Quite still he lies, and grins in my face,
His withers I have not wrung in the least.
Now shall ye hear me, whatever ye are,
Conjure with a spell more potent by far.

Com'st thou here, from hell's confine
A fugitive, behold this sign,
Holy emblem, 'neath whose power
All the fiends of darkness cower!
Its bristles rise! Behold it now to monstrous size dilate!
Thou thing accursed and reprobate!
Canst thou read the holy token,
Him that never was create,

Him that never may be spoken,
All from sky to sky pervading,
Vilely done to death degrading?

Spellbound behind the stove it stands,
And like an elephant expands!
It fills the alcove up complete:
Into a mist 'twill melt away.
Ascend not to the ceiling! Lay
Thyself down at the master's feet.
Thou seest, I threaten not in vain.
I'll scorch thee up with holy fire!
For that dread light best not remain,
Which burns with threefold glow! Retire,
Nor wait till I, thou spawn of hell,
Let loose on thee my mightiest spell!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*comes forward, as the mist subsides, in the dress of a travelling scholar, from behind the stove*).

What is the use of all this mighty stir?
Can I in anything oblige you, sir?

FAUST.

So this, then, was the kernel of the brute!
A travelling scholar? Here's a pleasant jest!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Your learned worship humbly I salute.
You gave me a fine sweating, I protest.

FAUST.

What is thy name?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Methinks the question's mean,
For one who holds the Word so very cheap,
Who, scorning all mere semblances, has been
Brooding on things in their quintessence deep!

FAUST.

Of gentlemen like you one may
The nature mostly from the names surmise,
Where what ye are they all too plainly say.
When they "Destroyer" style you, "Flygod, Prince of Lies!"
Speak, then! Who art thou?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Part of the power that still
Produces Good, while still devising ill.

FAUST.

A rare enigma! Say what it implies.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The spirit I that evermore denies.
And rightly am I thus employed,
For surely nought was e'er begot
But it deserved to be destroyed;
So were it better, things should not
Be into being brought at all.
Thus all these matters, which you call
Sin, Mischief, — Evil in a word,
Are my congenial element.

FAUST.

I heard
You call yourself a part, yet see
You stand there whole as whole can be.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Truth, truth, I vow, all truth and modesty!
Though man, that Microcosm of Folly, seem
A perfect whole to his own self-esteem,
Myself I, being less pretentious, call
Part of the part, which at the first was all;
Part of the darkness, from whose womb sprang light,
Proud light, which now doth with its dam contest
Her ancient rank, the space she filled of right;
And yet it can't succeed, for, strive its best,
It cleaves to bodies, fettered to them fast:
It streams from bodies, makes them fair and bright;
A body intercepts its passage, so
I hope, when bodies come to grief at last,
It will with them to sheer perdition go.

FAUST.

Your high vocation now I understand.
You find you can't annihilate wholesale,
So on a smaller scale you try your hand.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And let me own, to very small avail.
That which is nothing's opposite,
This something, this great lumbering world, although
I've launched at it, with all my might,
Storm, deluge, earthquake, levin-brand,
I can't effect its overthrow;
It hangs together still, good sea and land.
And then these misbegots accurst.

This spawn of brutes and men, alas!
Defy me, let me try my worst.
How many have I sent to grass!
Yet young fresh blood, do what I will,
Keeps ever circulating still.
In water, in the earth, in air,
In wet, dry, warm, cold, everywhere,
Germs without number are unfurled.
And but for fire and fire alone,
There would be nothing in the world,
That I could truly call my own.

FAUST.

So, that cold devil's fist of thine
Thou dost not scruple to oppose
To the unsleeping power benign,
Beneath whose breath all lives and grows;
It laughs to scorn your threats malign.
Strange son of chaos, hadst thou not
Best start upon another tack?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

It certainly is worth a thought!
More about this when I come back,
But for the present have I leave,
Your leave, to take myself away?

FAUST.

Why you should ask, I can't conceive.
We're strangers from this hour no more;
So visit me in future, pray,
Just when and how the fancy strikes you.
Here is the window, here the door,
And there a chimney, if it likes you.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I'd very quickly make my exit,
But that a trifling hindrance checks it;
The wizard's foot, — alas! 'tis true —
Upon your threshold —

FAUST.

Ha, 'tis well!
The Pentagram perplexes you.
But answer me, thou son of hell,
If that can thrust you backward, how
Contrived you to get in but now?
How came a spirit so astute
To tumble into such a snare?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You'll find, if you look closely to 't,
It is not drawn with proper care.
The outer angle's incomplete.
You may discover at a glance,
The lines converge, but do not meet.

FAUST.

That was indeed a lucky chance!
So you should be my prisoner, then?
Most rare good fortune, truly!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

When
The poodle bounded in, he took
No heed of what he was about.
Now things wear quite another look;
The devil's in, and can't get out.

FAUST.

Why through the window not withdraw?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Of fiends and goblins 'tis a law,
Get in howe'er they please, but so
As they came in, out they must go.
Free in the first choice, in the last
We're very slaves!

FAUST.

So even hell
Has got its legal code. 'Tis well.
Then with you gentlemen a fast
And binding contract may be made?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ay, and implicitly obeyed.
Whate'er is promised you by us
You to the letter shall enjoy,
Without abatement or alloy.
A theme too grave this to discuss
So hurriedly; when next we meet,
We'll talk it fully out; but now
I beg, nay, earnestly entreat,
This once you'll let me make my bow.

FAUST.

One moment, by your leave! I burn
For such rare news as yours must be.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Let me go now, I'll soon return,
And then ask what you like of me.

FAUST.

Of choice, and not by my device,
You ran yourself into this plight.
Once catch the devil, hold him tight!
He'll scarcely let you catch him twice.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well, if you wish it, here I stay,
On one condition, that the while
I with my sleights familiar may
Your moments worthily beguile.

FAUST.

Agreed! you have my leave, — but mind
Your sleights are of the pleasing kind!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Within this hour, my friend, be sure,
You for your senses shall procure
More than you heretofore have found
Within the year's unvaried round.
The songs my dainty spirits sing,
The lovely visions which they bring,
Are no mere empty glamour, no!
Your very smell entranced shall be,
Your palate lapped in ecstasy,
Your every nerve with rapture glow.
No preparation here we need.
We're in our places, so proceed!

SPIRITS.

Disappear, disappear,
Ye dark arches drear!
Let the blue sky of heaven
Look down on us here,

The beautiful blue sky,
With friendliest cheer!
Hence, clouds, begone,
That gloomily darkle!
Lo now, anon,
Little stars sparkle,
Mellower suns
Shine in on us here!
Heaven's sons, bright
In the spirit's arraying,
In hovering flight
Are bending and swaying.
Souls with a passionate
Upward aspiring,
View them, pursue them,
Soaring untiring!
And ribbons gay
Are flashing and gleaming,
Where lovers stray,
Musing and dreaming,
Stray on by grove
And meadow, requiting
Love with return of love,
Life for life plighting!
Bower on bower shining!
Tendrils entwining!
Grapes in huge clusters
Piled up profuse,
Under the wine-press
Spurting their juice.
Seething and foaming,
Wines gush into rills,
O'er the enamelled stones
Rush from the hills,
Broaden to lakes, that
Reflect from their sheen
Mountains and brakes, that

Are mantled in green.
And birds of all feather,
Pure rapture inhaling,
Sunwards are sailing,
Sailing together,
On to the isles
That lie smiling and dreaming,
Where the bright billows
Are rippling and gleaming;
Where we see jocund bands
Dance on before us,
Over the meadow-lands
Shouting in chorus,
All in the free air
Every way rambling;
Some up the mountains
Climbing and scrambling;
Some o'er the lakes and seas
Floating and swimming,
Others upon the breeze
Flying and skimming;
All to the sources
Of life pressing onward,
Flushed by the forces
That carry them sunward;
On to the measureless
Spaces above them,
On where the stars bless
The spirits that love them.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

He sleeps! Well done, ye little airy sprites!
You've fairly lullabied his wits to sleep:
I'm in your debt for these melodious sleights.
Thou'rt not the man, at least not yet, to keep
The devil in thy clutch. Around him play
With soothing visions from the realm of dream;

Across his brain let wild illusions stray,
And fool his fancy with their meteor gleam!
Ha! tooth of rat, methinks, would serve me well,
To break me up this threshold's spell.
No need of lengthened conjuration. Hark!
There rustles one my voice will quickly mark!

The master of the rats and mice,
Of flies, and frogs, and bugs, and lice,
Commands you straightway to appear,
And nibble at this threshold here,
Where now he smears it o'er with oil.
Ha! Here you are! Now, to your toil!
The point that kept me back lies there
Just in the front, beside the stair.
One nibble more, your task's complete!
Now, Faustus, now dream on till next we meet.
[*Exit.*

FAUST (*awaking*).

Am I again befooled? Vanish they so,
The throng of spirits that my fancy shaped?
Was then the fiend a dream, a lying show,
And that a poodle which but now escaped?

ACT II.

SCENE I. — FAUST'S *Study.*

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES.

FAUST.

A knock? Come in! Again my quiet broken?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis I.

FAUST.

Come in!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thrice must the words be spoken.

FAUST.

Come in, then!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*entering*).

So! That job's discussed.
We shall be firmer friends, I trust;
For, to dispel your fancies grim,
Behold me here, a springald trim,
In jerkin red, and laced with gold,
A cape of stiffest silk, a bold
Cock-feather in my cap; and see!
A long sharp rapier to boot!
Now, prithee, be advised by me,
And get just such another suit;
So, casting every trammel loose,
You'll learn what life is, and its use.

FAUST.

In every dress I'm sure to feel the dire
Constraints of earthly life severely:
I am too old to trifle merely,
Too young to be without desire.
What from the world have I to gain?
"Thou shalt refrain! Thou shalt refrain!"
This is the everlasting song
That's hummed and droned in every ear,
Which every hour, our whole life long,
Is croaked to us in cadence drear.
I wake each morning in despair,
And bitter tears could weep, to see the sun

Dawn on the day, that in its round will ne'er
Accomplish one poor wish of mine, not one;—
Yea, that with froward captiousness impairs
Each joy, of which I've dreamt, of half its zest,
And with life's thousand mean and paltry cares
Clogs the creations of my busy breast.
And when at evening's weary close
I lay me down in anguish on my bed,
There, even there, for me is no repose,
Scared as I am by visions wild and dread.
The god, who in my breast abides,
Through all its depths can stir my soul,
My every faculty he sways and guides,
Yet can he not what lies without control.
And thus by life, as by a load, oppressed,
I long for death, existence I detest.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And yet death never is a wholly welcome guest!

FAUST.

Oh, happy he around whose brows he winds
In victory's glorious hour the blood-stained bays,
Whom on the bosom of his girl he finds,
Warm from the dance's wild and maddening maze!
Oh, had it been, 'neath that high spirit's might,
My fate, while tranced in bliss, in death to sink!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yet was there one, who on a certain night
A certain dark-brown mixture feared to drink.

FAUST.

You have a taste, it seems, for playing spy.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Omniscient, no! Still few things 'scape my eye.

FAUST.

If, when my brain was racked and reeling,
A sweet and old familiar chime
Beguiled my all of childish feeling
With memories of a happier time,
Now do I curse whate'er doth pen
With wizard coil these souls of ours,
And chains them to this dreary den
With cozening and deceitful powers.
And chief be curst the proud conceit,
Which girds our minds as with a fence;
Curst be the semblances that cheat,
And play and palter with our sense!
Curst be the false and flattering dream
Of fame — a name beyond the grave,
Curst all that ours we fondly deem,
As wife and child, as plough and slave!
Be Mammon curst, when he with pelf
Inspires to deeds were else renown,
When he, to sot and pamper self,
Makes silken smooth our couch of down!
On wine's balsamic juice a curse,
A curse on love's ecstatic thrall,
A curse on hope, on faith, and worse
On patience be my curse than all!

Chorus of Invisible Spirits.

Woe, woe!
Thus hast laid it low,
The beautiful world,
With merciless blow.
It totters, it crumbles, it tumbles abroad,
Shattered and crushed by a demigod.

We trail
The ruins to chaos away,
And wail
The beauty that's lost, well-a-day!
Of the children of clay,
Thou mighty one, thou,
Fairer, more glorious, now
Build it once more,
Within thine own bosom build it up! Here
A new life-career
With quickened sense
Commence!
And songs, unheard before,
Shall chime upon thine ear!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These my tiny spirits be.
Hark, with what sagacity
They advise thee to pursue
Action, pleasure ever new!
Out into the world so fair
They would lure and lead thee hence,
From this lonely chamber, where
Stagnate life and soul and sense.

No longer trifle with the wretchedness,
That, like a vulture, gnaws your life away!
The worst society will teach you this,
You are a man 'mongst men, and feel as they.
Yet 'tis not meant, I pray you, see,
To thrust you 'mong the rabble rout; —
I'm none of your great folks, no doubt,
But if, in fellowship with me,
To range through life you are content,
I will most cheerfully consent

To be your own upon the spot.
I am your chum. You'd rather not?
Well! If your scruples it will save,
I am your servant, yea, your slave!

FAUST.

And in return what must I do for you?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, time enough to talk of that!

FAUST.

Nay, nay!
The devil's selfish — is and was alway —
And is not like for mere God's sake to do
A liberal turn to any child of clay.
Out with the terms, and plainly! Such as thou
Are dangerous servants in a house, I trow.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I bind myself to serve you here, — to do
Your bidding promptly, whatsoe'er it be,
And, when we come together yonder, you
Are then to do the same for me.

FAUST.

I prize that yonder at a rush!
Only this world to atoms crush,
And then that other may arise!
From earth my every pleasure flows,
Yon Sun looks down upon my woes;
Let me but part myself from those,
Then come what may, in any guise!
To idle prate I'll close mine ears,
If we hereafter hate or love,

Or if there be in yonder spheres,
As here, an Under and Above!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You're in the proper mood to venture! Bind
Yourself, and pleasure in my sleights you'll find,
While this life lasts. I'll give you more
Than eye of man hath ever seen before.

FAUST.

What wilt thou give, thou sorry devil? When
Were the aspiring souls of men
Fathomed by such a thing as thee?
Oh, thou hast food that satisfieth never,
Gold, ruddy gold thou hast, that restlessly
Slips, like quicksilver, through the hand for ever;
A game, where we must losers be;
A girl, that, on my very breast,
My neighbour woos with smile and wink;
Fame's rapturous flash of godlike zest,
That, meteor-like, is doomed to sink.
Show me the fruit that, ere 'tis plucked, doth rot,
And trees that every day grow green anew!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Such task as this affrights me not.
I have such treasures at command for you.
But, my good friend, the time draws nigh
When we may banquet on the best in peace!

FAUST.

If e'er at peace on sluggard's couch I lie,
Then may my life upon the instant cease!
Cheat thou me ever by thy glozing wile,
So that I cease to scorn myself, or e'er

My senses with a perfect joy beguile,
Then be that day my last! I offer fair,
How say'st thou?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Done!

FAUST.

My hand upon it! There!
If to the passing moment e'er I say,
"Oh, linger yet, thou art so fair!"
Then cast me into chains you may,
Then will I die without a care!
Then may the death-bell sound its call,
Then art thou from thy service free,
The clock may stand, the index fall,
And time and tide may cease for me!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Think well; we sha'n't forget the terms you name.

FAUST.

Your perfect right I must allow.
Not rashly to the pact I came.
I am a slave as I am now;
Yours or another's, 'tis to me the same!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Then at the Doctors' feast this very day
Will I my post, as your attendant, take.
Just one thing more! To guard against mistake,
Oblige me with a line or two, I pray.

FAUST.

Pedant, must thou have writing, too?
Hast thou no true man, or man's promise, known?
Is not my word of mouth enough for you,
To pledge my days for all eternity?
Does not the universe go raving on,
In all its ever-eddying currents, free
To pass from change to change, and I alone,
Shall a mere promise curb or fetter me?
Yet doth man's heart so hug the dear deceit,
Who would its hold without a pang undo?
Blest he, whose soul is with pure truth replete,
No sacrifice shall ever make him rue.
But, oh, your stamped and scribbled parchment sheet
A spectre is, which all men shrink to view.
The word dies ere it quits the pen,
And wax and sheepskin lord it then.
What would you have, spirit of ill!
Brass, marble, parchment, paper? — Say,
Am I to write with pen, or style, or graver?
I care not — choose whiche'er you will.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why throw your eloquence away,
Or give it such a very pungent savour?
Pshaw! Any scrap will do — 'tis quite the same —
With the least drop of blood just sign your name.

FAUST.

If that will make you happy, why, a claim
So very whimsical I'll freely favour.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Blood is a juice of quite peculiar kind.

FAUST.

Fear not that I the compact will evade!
My life's whole struggle, heart and mind,
Chimes with the promise I have made.
Too high I've soared — too proudly dreamt,
I'm only peer for such as thee;
The Mighty Spirit spurns me with contempt,
And Nature veils her face from me.
Thought's chain is snapt; — for many a day
I've loathed all knowledge every way.
So quench we now our passion's fires
In sense and sensual delights,
Unveil all hidden magic sleights,
To minister to our desires!
Let us plunge in the torrent of time, and range
Through the weltering chaos of chance and change,
Then pleasure and pain, disaster and gain,
May course one another adown my brain.
Change and excitement may work as they can,
Rest there is none for the spirit of man.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

To you is set nor goal nor stint.
If you'd sip the sweetest of everything,
And hawk at pleasure upon the wing,
Much joy, I'm sure, I wish you in't.
Only fall to, and don't be coy.

FAUST.

Again I say, my thoughts are not of joy.
I devote myself to the whirl and roar,
To the bliss that throbs with a pulse like pain,
To the hate that we dote on and fondle o'er,
The defeat that inspirits both nerves and brain.
Of its passion for knowledge cured, my soul

Henceforth shall expand to all forms of woe,
And all that is all human nature's dole
In my heart of hearts I shall feel and know;
With highest, lowest, in spirit I shall cope;
Pile on my breast their joys, their griefs, their cares,
So all men's souls shall come within my scope,
And mine at last go down a wreck like theirs.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, trust to me, who have through many a year
On this tough morsel chewed the cud,
That from the cradle to the bier
No man of mortal flesh and blood
Hath e'er digested the old leaven.
Trust one of us, this whole so vast
Is only for the God of Heaven!
In everlasting radiance He is glassed,
Us hath He into outer darkness cast,
And you, you mortals, only may
See day succeed to night, and night to day.

FAUST.

Nay, but I will.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That's well enough to say;
Only I don't quite see my way.
Art's long, time short. You'd best permit
Yourself to be advised a bit.
Club with a poet; soaring free,
Let him the realm of fancy sweep,
And every noble quality
Upon your honoured forehead heap;
The lion's magnanimity,
The fleetness of the hind,

The fiery blood of Italy,
The Northern's constant mind.
Let him for you the art divine,
High aims with cunning to combine,
And, with young blood at fever full,
To love on system and by rule.
A gentleman of such a kind
I should myself be glad to find,
And, 'sooth, by me so rare a wight
Should be Sir Microcosmus hight.

FAUST.

What am I, then, if never by no art
The crown of mortal nature may be gained,
For which our every energy is strained?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thou art, when all's done, what thou art.
A periwig with countless ringlets buy,
Array thy feet in socks a cubit high,
Still, still thou wilt remain just what thou art.

FAUST.

'Tis true, I feel! In vain have I amassed
Within me all the treasures of man's mind,
And when I pause, and sit me down at last,
No new power welling inwardly I find;
A hairbreadth is not added to my height.
I am no nearer to the Infinite.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Good sir, you view these matters just
As any common mortal would;
But take a higher strain we must,
Nor let life's joys our grasp elude.

Why, what the deuce! Sure, foot and hand,
And blood and brain are yours! And what
I can enjoy, control, command,
Is it the less my own for that?
If I for horses six can pay,
Their powers are added to my store;
A proper man I dash away,
As though I had legs twenty-four.
Up, then, no more a dreamer be,
But forth into the world with me!
I tell you what, your speculating wretch
Is like a beast upon a barren waste,
Round, ever round, by an ill spirit chased,
Whilst all about him fair green pastures stretch.

FAUST.

But how begin?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We start at once.
Ugh! what a place of torture dire!
Call you this life — yourself to tire,
And some few youngsters, each a dunce?
Leave that to neighbour Paunch to do.
Why plague yourself with threshing straw?
What's best of all that's known to you,
You dare not tell these striplings raw.
I hear one now upon the stair.

FAUST.

I cannot see him.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Long and late,
Poor boy, he's waited. In despair

We must not send him from the gate.
Give me your cap and gown: the mask,
You'll see, will fit me to a hair.
[*Changes his dress.*
Now leave all to my wit. I ask
But fifteen minutes. Go now! There!
And for our pleasant trip prepare. [*Exit* FAUST.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*putting on* FAUST'S *gown*).

Only scorn reason, knowledge, all that can
Give strength, or might, or dignity to man,
And let thyself be only more and more
Besotted by the spirit of lies
With faith in necromantic lore,
Its shams, delusions, sorceries,
And thou art mine beyond recall!
Fate to this man a soul has given
That brooks not to be held in thrall,
But onward evermore is driven,
And, on its own mad fancies bent,
In earth's delights finds no content.
Him will I drag through all the fires
Of passions, appetites, desires,
Through all the dull unmeaning round
Of man and woman, sight and sound.
Oh, he shall sprawl, be stunned, stick fast
In sheer bewilderment at last.
His longings infinite to whet,
Dainties and drink shall dance before
His fevered lips; nor shall he get
The peace he'll pray for evermore.
Here and hereafter such as he
Are marked for doom; and even although
He had not sold himself to me,
He must perforce have come to woe.

Enter a STUDENT.

STUDENT.

To town quite recently I came,
And make it, sir, my earliest care
To see and talk with one whose name
Is named with reverence everywhere.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You're too polite! A man you see,
Like scores of other men, in me.
Elsewhere have you not found your way?

STUDENT.

Take me in hand, oh, do, sir, pray!
I've every wish, nay, have, in truth,
A very passion, to be taught,
Some money, too, and health and youth;
My mother scarcely could be brought
To part with me; but come I would,
To learn whate'er 'tis best I should.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

If such be really the case,
You've come to just the proper place.

STUDENT.

Yet I, the honest truth to say,
Already wish myself away!
These walls and lecture-rooms I find
By no means of a pleasant kind.
All is so close, so cramped, so mean,
No trees, nor anything that's green,—
Mewed up in them, my spirits sink;
I neither hear, nor see, nor think.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Habit alone cures that. Just so
The child at first will not, you know,
Take kindly to its mother's breast,
But soon it suckles there with zest.
Even thus at wisdom's breast will you
Each day find pleasure ever new.

STUDENT.

Upon her neck I'll hang with joy; the way
To clamber there, do you, sir, only say.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ere you go further, say, on which
Of all the faculties your fancies pitch.

STUDENT.

Sir, my ambition is to be
A scholar widely read and sound,
All things on earth, in heaven, or sea,
To grasp with comprehensive view,
In short, to master all the round
Of science and of nature too.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You're on the right track; only don't
Get scatter-brained in the pursuit.

STUDENT.

Oh, never fear, sir; — that I won't.
Body and soul I'll buckle to't.
Yet should I like upon occasion
Some freedom, some small relaxation,

When skies are bright, and fields are gay,
Upon a summer's holiday.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Use well your time, — so fast it flies;
Yet Method teaches, in what wise
Of time itself you may make prize.
And, first and foremost to that end,
I counsel you, my dear young friend,
A course of Logic to attend.
Your mind will then be so well braced,
In Spanish boots so tightly laced,
That henceforth, by discretion taught,
'Twill creep along the path of thought,
And not, with all the winds that blow,
Go Will-o'-Wisping to and fro.
Then many a good day will be spent
In teaching that the things you used
To knock off at a stroke, with just
As little thought or pains as went
To eating or to drinking, must
Be by First! Second! Third! produced.
The web of thought, we may assume,
Is like some triumph of the loom,
Where one small simple treddle starts
A thousand threads to motion, — where
The flying shuttle shoots and darts,
Now over here, now under there.
We look, but see not how, so fast
Thread blends with thread, and twines, and mixes,
When lo! one single stroke at last
The thousand combinations fixes;
In steps me then Philosophy, and proves
That, being set in certain grooves,
Things which have passed before your eyes
Could by no chance be otherwise.

The First was so, the Second so,
Ergo the Third and Fourth ensued;
But given no First nor Second, no
Third, yea, nor Fourth had been or could.
Scholars in matters of this kind
Are everywhere profound believers,
Yet none of them, that I can find,
Have signalised themselves as weavers.
He that would study and portray
A living creature, thinks it fit
To start with finding out the way
To drive the spirit out of it.
This done, he holds within his hand
The pieces to be named and stated,
But, ah! the spirit-tie, that spanned
And knit them, has evaporated.
This process chemic science pleases
To call Naturæ Encheiresis,
And, in the very doing so, it
Makes of itself a mock, and does not know it.

STUDENT.

I don't entirely comprehend.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

In that respect you'll quickly mend,
When once you learn with true insight
To classify all things aright.

STUDENT.

I'm so perplexed with what you've said,
That just for all the world I feel
As if some clattering mill-wheel
Were turning, turning in my head.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Before all other studies you
Must Metaphysics next pursue.
There see that you profoundly scan
What ne'er was meant for brain of man;
Be thought or no thought in your head,
Fine phrases there will do instead:
And mind, that this half-year in all
You do you're most methodical.
Five hours of lecture daily; so
Be in your seat right to the minute!
Prepare the subject ere you go,
Be thoroughly well read up in it.
Thus see that the professor's stating
No more than all the text-books show;
Yet still write down each word, as though
He were the Holy Ghost dictating.

STUDENT.

No need to say that to me twice.
I see 'tis excellent advice;
For we take home, and study, quite
At ease, what's down in black and white.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

But choose some Faculty.

STUDENT.

At the mere name
Of Jurisprudence I rebel.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

In that, I own, you're not so much to blame,
For what that science is, I know full well.

Laws are transmitted, as one sees,
Just like inherited disease.
They're handed down from race to race,
And noiseless glide from place to place.
Reason they turn to nonsense; worse,
They make beneficence a curse!
Ah me! That you're a grandson you,
As long as you're alive, shall rue.
The law which is within us placed
At birth, unhappily about
That law there's never any doubt.

STUDENT.

Your words have heightened my distaste.
Oh, the fortunate man whom you
Vouchsafe to give instruction to!
I almost think Theology
Would be the study best for me.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I should not wish, friend, to mislead you;
Yet in that branch of lore, indeed, you
Will find it hard to keep away
From paths that carry far astray.
In it so much hid poison lies
Which you may fail to recognise,
Nay, will most probably confound
With the true medicine around.
But here again one rule is clear;
To one, and but one guide, give ear,
Take all his words as gospel in,
And swear by them through thick and thin.
As a broad principle, hold on
By words, words, words! So you, anon,
Through their unfailing doors the fane
Of perfect certainty will gain.

STUDENT.

But surely, sir, a meaning should
In words be always understood?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No doubt, no doubt! Yet 'twere absurd
Upon that point to feel too much concern;
Since just where meaning fails, a word
Comes patly in to serve your turn.
Words, my young friend, — why, nothing suits
So well as matter for disputes;
With words your systems you can weave in,
Words are such fine things to believe in,
And from a word no jot or tittle
Can be abstracted, much or little.

STUDENT.

I fear my numerous questions tease you;
Yet once more I must trouble you.
On Medicine I would fain, so please you,
Receive a pregnant word or two.
Three years, they slip away so fast,
And, heavens! the field is quite too vast.
Still with a hint a man may hope
His way with more success to grope.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

This prosing bores me. I must play
The devil now in my own way.
(*Aloud*) Well, any simpleton may seize
The soul of Medicine with ease —
You simply study through and through
The world of man and nature too,
To end with leaving things to God,
To make or mar them. 'Tis in vain

That you go mooning all abroad,
Picking up science grain by grain:
Each man learns only what he can.
But he that has the gift and power
To profit by the passing hour,
He is your proper man!
You're not ill built, — will, I conceive,
Show mettle on occasion due; —
If you but in yourself believe,
Others will then believe in you.
Especially be sure to find
The way to manage the womenkind.
Their everlasting Ohs! and Ahs!
Of this be sure,
Whate'er their fashion or their cause,
All from one point admit of cure.
With air respectful and demure
Approach as they advance, and, mum!
You have them all beneath your thumb.
But a degree must first instil
Conviction in them, that your skill
Surpasses other people's; then
At once they make you free of all
Those tête-à-tête endearments small,
Years scarce secure for other men:
The little pulse adroitly squeeze,
With looks on fire with passion seize
And boldly clasp the tapering waist,
To see if it be tightly laced.

STUDENT.

Oh, that is much more in my way!
One sees at least the where and how.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Dear friend, all theory is gray,
And green life's golden tree.

STUDENT.

I vow,
I'm like one in a dream. Might I
Intrude on you some other time, to hear
Your wisdom make the grounds of all this clear?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

So far as I can serve you, I will try.

STUDENT.

I cannot tear myself away,
Let me before you, sir, my album lay;
Some small memorial of your favour, pray?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

With all my heart. [*Writes and returns the book.*

STUDENT (*reads*).

Eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum.
[*Closes it reverentially, and retires.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Take for your law the ancient saw, and that cousin of mine, the snake.
And, with that likeness of yours to God, your heart is like to break.

FAUST (*entering*).

And now where shall we go?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You've but to name
What place you choose, — to me 'tis quite the same.

Suppose we see the small folk first,
And then upon the great ones burst.
With what delight, what profit, too,
You'll revel the pleasant circuit through!

FAUST.

But with my long beard can I face
Society? I want the grace,
The easy, smooth, and polished air,
That of a man's expected there.
Nor could I learn it, if I would.
Adapt myself I never could
To what the world demands of all.
And in a crowd I feel so small,
'Tis certain I shall always be
Embarrassed when in company.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

All that will come in time. Be self-possessed!
In that one word is life's whole art expressed.

FAUST.

But how are we to travel? Where
Are horses, servants, carriage, pray?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

This cloak out so we've but to lay,
And 'twill transport us through the air.
In this bold trip no need to cumber
Yourself with luggage and such lumber.
A little gas, which I've at hand,
Will waft us straight o'er sea and land,
And, as we travel lightly, too,
On at a rattling pace we'll spin.

I wish you joy, friend, of the new
Career of life you now begin.

SCENE II. — *Auerbach's Cellar at Leipzig.*

A Drinking Party of Boon Companions.

FROSCH.

Will nobody drink? Is there never a joke
Among you, or bit of fun to poke?
At other times you can blaze away;
But egad! you're all like damp straw to-day.

BRANDER.

Your fault! You do nothing to make us jolly,
No beastliness, no stupid folly.

FROSCH (*flings a glass of wine at his head*).

There's both for you!

BRANDER.

Brute! Beast!

FROSCH.

You sought it,
My lad of wax, and now you've caught it!

SIEBEL.

Any fellow that quarrels, kick him out!
Come, clear your throats, boys, swill and shout.
Hip, hip, huzza!

ALTMAYER.

I'm lost! Oh dear!
Some cotton! This rowdy splits my ear!

SIEBEL.

Until the vaults with the echo reel,
The strength of the bass you never feel.

FROSCH.

Right! Those that don't like it needn't stay!
Ah, tara, lara, da!

ALTMAYER.

Ah, tara, lara, da!

FROSCH.

Our throats are tuned up, so fire away!

(*Sings.*)

The dear old Roman Empire, how
Does it manage to hang together?

BRANDER.

A filthy song! A political song! Fie, fie!
A most offensive song, say I.
Thank God each morning you have not
To care for that same Roman Empire got.
I hold it a thing to be grateful for,
That I'm neither Kaiser nor Chancellor.
Still, we should have a chief, and may, I hope.
We will, we shall, we must elect a Pope!
I need not tell you, for you're all aware,
What qualities weigh heaviest there,
And lift a man into the chair.

FROSCH (*sings*).

Fly away, fly away, Lady Nightingale,
Over the mountain, and over the dale!

Fly to my sweetheart out over the sea,
And greet her a thousand times from me.

SIEBEL.

No greetings, ho, to sweetings! 'Tis exceedingly improper!

FROSCH.

I will greet her, kiss her, treat her! You sha'n't put on me a stopper.

(*Sings.*)

Undo the bolts at dead of night,
And let the lad that loves you in,
But in the gray of the morning light
Bar him without, and yourself within!

SIEBEL.

Sing on! Our ears with her perfections din!
My time will come to laugh, when you look blue.
She led me a fool's dance, and so she will lead you.
I'd give her for a lover a hobgoblin,
To toy with her on crossroads in the dark;
An old buck-goat, back from the Blocksberg hobbling,
Might tickle her up in passing for a lark!
The blood and bone of any stout young blade
Are much too good for such an arrant jade.
No, no, the only greeting I will hear of
Is smashing all the gipsy's windows clear off.

BRANDER (*striking the table*).

Silence! Silence! To me give ear!
You'll admit that I know what's what.
We have some love-sick spoonies here,
And I must treat them to something pat.

And like to enliven their doleful cheer.
Of the very last fashion is my strain.
Full chorus, mind, for the refrain!

(*Sings.*)

Once in a cellar there lived a rat,
His paunch it grew a thumper,
For he lived on nothing but butter and fat,
Not Luther's self was plumper.
The cook laid poison for him one day,
And he fell into a terrible way,
As if love's tortures twinged him!

CHORUS.

As if love's tortures twinged him!

And he ran out, and round about,
And he could not think what ailed him,
And he scratched, and clawed, and nibbled, and gnawed,
But his fury nought availed him;
He felt the pain shoot from head to foot,
'Twas soon all up with him, poor brute,
As if love's tortures twinged him!

CHORUS.

As if love's tortures twinged him!

In pain, in dismay, in broad noonday,
He dashed into the kitchen,
Fell down on the hearth, and there he lay,
Convulsed with a woful twitching;
But the cook she laughed, when his pain she spied,
"Ha! ha! He's at his last gasp!" she cried,
As if love's tortures twinged him!

CHORUS.

As if love's tortures twinged him!

SIEBEL.

How easy it is to tickle flats!
To lay down poison for poor rats
Is wit of such a spicy flavour!

BRANDER.

No doubt they stand high in your favour.

ALTMAYER.

Fatguts is down in his luck, — 'tis that
Makes him soft-hearted and dejected;
Poor devil, he sees in the bloated rat
The image of himself reflected.

Enter FAUST *and* MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Before all things I must bring you to
A circle of jolly dogs, that you
May see how lightly life can sit.
Every day is a feast with such
Hard-drinking fellows as these. With much
Self-satisfaction and little wit,
Day after day, they may all be found,
Spinning along the same narrow round,
Like a young kitten pursuing its tail.
So long as their heads don't ache or ail,
And with mine host they can score their way,
No care or misgiving at all have they.

BRANDER.

Strangers, and just arrived, that's clear,
Their cut and deportment are so queer!
Not been an hour in town, I'll swear.

FROSCH.

For once you're right, old fellow, there.
Leipzig for ever! 'Tis Paris in small!
It gives us a style, sir, a style to us all.

SIEBEL.

For what do you these strangers take?

FROSCH.

Just leave them to me. In a brace of shakes
Out of these fellows I'll worm the truth,
As easy as draw you a young child's tooth.
Noblemen I should say they were,
They've such a haughty dissatisfied air.

BRANDER.

Mountebanks! That's about their level!

ALTMAYER.

Perhaps!

FROSCH.

I'll trot them. Pray you, note!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

These scum would never surmise the devil,
Although he had them by the throat!

FAUST.

Your servant, sirs!

SIEBEL.

The same to you!
[*Aside, looking askance at* MEPHISTOPHELES.
Limps on one foot? So queerly, too!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Beside you have we leave our chairs to set?
Instead of good drink, then, which here we cannot get,
We shall have your good company for cheer.

ALTMAYER.

You're mighty hard to please, it would appear!

FROSCH.

Just fresh from Rippach, ain't you? I daresay,
You supped, now, with Squire Hans, upon the way?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

To-day we galloped past his door;
But had much talk with him, the time before,
About his cousins here; and he presents
To each of you through us his special compliments.
[*Bowing toward* FROSCH.

ALTMAYER (*aside*).

That's home! A knowing dog!

SIEBEL.

A biting wit!

FROSCH.

I'll serve him out, you'll see. Just wait a bit!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Did we not hear — I can't be wrong —
Well-practised voices chanting chorus?
No doubt the vaulted ceiling o'er us
Must echo rarely to a song.

FROSCH.

You are a connoisseur of some pretence?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, no! My powers are weak, my love immense.

ALTMAYER.

Tip us a stave!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A score, if you incline.

SIEBEL.

Brand new, then, let it be, some jolly strain!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We have quite recently returned from Spain,
That beauteous land of song and wine.

(*Sings.*)

A king there was, be't noted,
Who had a lusty flea.

FROSCH.

Mark him, a flea! You take the jest?
Now, by my faith, a royal guest!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*sings*).

A king there was, be't noted,
Who had a lusty flea,
And on this flea he doted,
And loved him tenderly.
A message to the tailor goes,
Swift came the man of stitches,
"Ho, measure the youngster here for clothes,
And measure him for breeches!"

BRANDER.

Mind you impress on Snip to take
Especial care about the fit,
And, as he loves his head, to make
The breeches without wrinkles sit.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*resumes his song*).

In silk and satin of the best
Soon was the flea arrayed there,
Ribbons had he upon his breast,
Likewise a star displayed there;
Prime minister anon he grew,
With star of huge dimensions,
And his kindred, male and female too,
Got titles, rank, and pensions.

And lords and ladies, high and fair,
Were grievously tormented;
Sore bitten the queen and her maidens were,
But they did not dare resent it.

They even were afraid to scratch,
Howe'er our friends might rack them,
But we without a scruple catch,
And when we catch we crack them.

CHORUS.

But we without a scruple catch,
And when we catch, we crack them.

FROSCH.

Bravo! First-rate!

SIEBEL.

So perish all
The race of fleas, both great and small.

BRANDER.

Catch me them daintily on the hip
Between the nail and the finger-tip!

ALTMAYER.

Huzza for freedom! Huzza for wine!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

To pledge a bumper glass to freedom, I'd be glad,
Were not this wine of yours so execrably bad.

SIEBEL.

Let's hear no more of that, Sir Superfine!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

But that our host were apt to be offended,
I'd give these worthy fellows here
From our own cellar something splendid!

SIEBEL.

I'll make that square, so never fear.

FROSCH.

Make good your words, and you're a trump. The sample
I charge you, though, to make it ample,
For, if I have to judge of tipple, I
Must have a good mouthful to judge it by.

ALTMAYER (*aside*).

Soho! They're from the Rhine, I see.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A gimlet here?

BRANDER.

For what, now, can that be?
You can't have got the hogsheads at the door?

ALTMAYER.

The landlord's tool-chest's yonder on the floor.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*taking the gimlet, to* FROSCH).

Now say for which you have a mind.

FROSCH.

What! Have you them of every kind?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Name each his choice, strong, sparkling, old, or heady

ALTMAYER (*to* FROSCH).

Aha! your lips are watering already.

FROSCH.

Let it be Rhenish, if I may command.
For best of cheer I'll back old Fatherland.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*boring a hole in the edge of the table where* FROSCH *is sitting*).

A little wax to stop the hole! Quick, quick!

ALTMAYER (*to* FROSCH).

Pshaw, this is palpably a juggler's trick!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* BRANDER).

And you?

BRANDER.

Champagne, champagne for me,
Creaming and sparkling cheerily!

[MEPHISTOPHELES *bores; meanwhile one of the party has made stoppers of wax, and stopped the holes.*

BRANDER.

One can't always put foreign gear aside;
For good things we have often far to go.
French men no real German can abide,
He drinks their wines without a scruple, though.

SIEBEL (*as* MEPHISTOPHELES *approaches him*).

The sour, I own, I can't away with.
Pure sweet, I'd like a glass of that.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*bores*).

You shall, sir, have Tokay to play with.

ALTMAYER.

No, no, sir, no! I tell you what:
You're making game, you are, of us.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That were somewhat too venturous
With men of mark like you. You doubt it?
Quick! Tell me without more ado
What wine I am to serve for you?

ALTMAYER.

Any! So that you don't stand haggling long about it!

[*After all the holes have been bored, and stoppers put into them.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*with strange gestures*).

Wine-grapes of the vine are born,
Front of he-goat sprouts with horn,
Wine is juice, and vine-stocks wood,
Wooden board yields wine as good!
Here is truth for him that sees
Into nature's mysteries;
Miracles when you receive,
You have only to believe!

Now draw your stoppers, and fall to!

ALL (*as they draw the stoppers, and the wine each has selected runs into his glass*).

Oh, fountain, beautiful to view!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Be very careful. Drink your fill,
But see that not a drop you spill!
[*They drink repeatedly.*

ALL (*sing*).

As savagely jolly are we,
As any five hundred porkers!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These sots from all restraint are freed,
And so are blest, and blest indeed.

FAUST.

I'm sick of this, and would be gone.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Only a little moment stay;
You'll see a glorious display
Of what mere beasts they are, anon.

SIEBEL (*drinks carelessly; wine is spilt on the ground and turns into flame*).

Help! Hell's broke loose! We all are shent!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*adjuring the flame*).

Be quiet, kindly element! [*To the topers*
This time 'twas nothing but a tiny spark
Of purgatorial fire, not worth remark!

SIEBEL.

Just wait, and your cock's comb I'll mar.
You do not know, it strikes me, who we are.

FROSCH.

His tricks a second time just let him try.

ALTMAYER.

Let's send him to the right-about, say I.

SIEBEL.

Confound you, coming to provoke us
With playing off your hocus-pocus!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Silence, old vat!

SIEBEL.

You broomstick, you!
And so you'd fain be saucy, too?

BRANDER.

Wait, and I'll thrash you black and blue.

ALTMAYER (*draws a stopper from the table; fire shoots out toward him*).

I burn! I'm all on fire!

SIEBEL.

The wizard!
Down with him! Stick him through the gizzard!
[*They draw their knives, and make a rush at* MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*with solemn gesticulations*).

Voices that delude the ear,
Forms that mock the eye, appear!

Let the distant seem the near,
Be ye there and be ye here!
[*They stand amazed and stare at each other.*

ALTMAYER.

Where am I? What a lovely land!

FROSCH.

Vineyards! How strange!

SIEBEL.

And grapes that court the hand!

BRANDER.

Here, under these green leaves by me,
See, what a stem! What branches, see!
[*Seizes* SIEBEL *by the nose. The rest do the same with each other, and brandish their knives.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*as before*).

Phantoms of delusion, rise,
Lift the bandage from their eyes!
And take note, ye swinish soaks,
In what wise the devil jokes!
[*He disappears with* FAUST. *The topers recoil from one another.*

SIEBEL.

What's this?

ALTMAYER.

How's this?

FROSCH.

Was that your nose?

BRANDER (*to* SIEBEL).

On yours, too, see, my fingers close!

ALTMAYER.

It sent a shock through all my limbs!
A chair! I'm falling! My head swims!

FROSCH.

What ails you all?

SIEBEL.

Where is he? Where?
Let me but catch the knave, he dies, I swear.

ALTMAYER.

Out of the cellar-door, astride
A huge wine-tun, I saw him ride.
I feel like lead about the feet.
[*Turning toward the table.*
Zounds! Should the wine be running yet!

SIEBEL.

'Twas all a sham, a trick, a cheat!

FROSCH.

Yet, that it was wine, I would bet.

BRANDER.

But how about the grapes?

ALTMAYER.

Well, after that,
Doubt miracles who may, I won't, that's flat.

Scene III. — *Witches' Kitchen.*

A large caldron suspended above the fire upon a low hearth. Through the fumes that ascend from it various figures are visible. A female ape sits beside the caldron skimming it, and watching that it does not boil over. The male ape with the young ones sits near her, and warms himself. Walls and ceiling are decorated with witches' furniture of the most fantastic kind.

Faust, Mephistopheles.

FAUST.

I loathe this wizard rubbish. You maintain
That in this chaos of a crazy brain
I shall my wasted strength repair?
Take counsel of an aged hag? Oh, shame!
Can the foul mess that simmers there
Strike thirty winters from my frame?
If you know nothing better, I despair!
Already do I feel, to hope were vain.
Hath nature, hath some soul of noble strain,
Discovered no elixir anywhere?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Now with your old sagacity you speak!
There is a natural recipe for youth; but you
For that must in another volume seek,
And there it makes a striking chapter, too!

FAUST.

What is its nature? Tell me, what?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Look you! A remedy, to be got
Sans sorcery, gold, or medicine.
Hence to the fields at once! Begin
To hack and delve with might and main,
Yourself and your desires confine
Within the very narrowest line;
On simple food yourself sustain,
With beasts live as a beast, and think it not a bore
Yourself to dung the field you are to reap.
This, trust me, is the best of ways to keep
The fire of youth within you to fourscore.

FAUST.

I am not used to toil, and 'tis too late to force
Myself to wield the spade. A life so bare,
So cramped, would drive me to despair.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Then is the witch our sole resource.

FAUST.

But why this beldam? Cannot you
Without her aid the potion brew?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That were fine waste of time. Go to!
Rather would I a thousand bridges build,
Within the time 'twould take to brew it.
No matter how you may be skilled,

You must give tireless patience to it.
A quiet spirit works at it for years;
Time, only time, the fermentation clears,
And concentrates its subtle force.
All the ingredients of the stew
Are wondrous in their kind and source.
The devil taught the witch, 'tis true,
But, make it, that he cannot do.
[*Turning to the Apes.*
A handsome brood as ever was!
This is the lad, and this the lass. [*To the Apes.*
The dame is not at home, it seems?

THE APES.

She takes her 'rouse
Outside the house,
Up by the chimney among the beams.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And how long is she apt to stay,
When she is out for such a cause?

APES.

We just have time to warm our paws,
And nothing more, while she's away.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

How like you them, the dainty brutes?

FAUST.

Such loathsome creatures have I never seen.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Nay, nay! A chat like this, I ween,
Is just the thing that best my fancy suits!
[*To the Apes*
Tell me, ye whelps accurst, what you
Are stirring there at such a rate?

APES.

Coarse beggar's broth we boil and stew.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Your custom for it will be great.

THE HE-APE (*approaching and fawning upon* MEPHISTOPHELES).

Tarry not, but in a trice
Shake the box, and fling the dice!
I am poor, so let me win;
Poverty is such a sin;
But, if money once I had,
Who would say that I was mad?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

How happy, now, it would the monkey make,
If in the lottery he might only stake!
[*The young Apes, who have meanwhile been playing with a large globe, roll it forwards.*

THE HE-APE.

This is the world,
Evermore twirled
Round about, round about,
Destined to bound about!

Mounting and sinking,
Like crystal clinking;
Smashing like winking
Certain to follow!
All within hollow.
Here 'tis all o'er bright,
Here even more bright!
So jolly am I!
Out of the way,
Old boy! Touch it not!
You're booked, you must die!
'Tis nothing but clay,
And that goes to pot!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

For what is the sieve here?

HE-APE (*takes it down*).

Came you to thieve here,
Straight 'twould show me why you came.
[*Runs to the She-Ape, and makes her look through it.*
Through the sieve look, look! Dost thou
Recognise the thief, and now
Art afraid to name his name?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*approaches the fire*).

And this pot?

THE APES (*male and female*).

The crack-brained sot,
He knows not the pot,
He knows not the kettle!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Unmannerly brute!

THE HE-APE.

Look ye now, put
This whisk in your hand, and sit down on the settle.
[*Forces* MEPHISTOPHELES *to sit down.*

FAUST (*who has, meanwhile, been standing before a mirror, now advancing toward, and now retiring from, it*).

What form divine is this, that seems to live
Within the magic glass before mine eyes!
Oh, love, to me thy swiftest pinion give,
And waft me to the region where she lies!
Oh, if I stir beyond this spot, and dare
Advance to scan it with a nearer gaze,
The vision fades and dies as in a haze.
A woman's form beyond expression fair!
Can woman be so fair? Or must I deem
In this recumbent form I see revealed
The quintessence of all that heaven can yield?
On earth can aught be found of beauty so supreme?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why, when a God works hard for six whole days,
And when his task is over, says, "Bravo!"
That he should turn out something to amaze,
Is nothing more than natural, you know.
Gaze on your fill! As choice a treasure
My power for you can soon provide;
And happy he beyond all measure,
Who has the luck to bear home such a bride!
[FAUST *continues to gaze into the mirror.* MEPHISTOPHELES, *lounging on the settle, and playing with the whisk, continues.*

Here like a king upon my throne I sit,
My sceptre here! My crown, though, where is it?

THE APES (*who up to this time have been indulging in all sorts of fantastic gambols, bring* MEPHISTOPHELES *a crown with loud acclamations*).

O, deign, with a flood
Of sweat and of blood,
The crown to belime!

[*They handle the crown awkwardly, and break it into two pieces, with which they dance round and round.*

'Tis done! He! He!
We speak and we see,
We hear and we rhyme.

FAUST (*before the mirror*).

Woe's me! As though I should go mad, I feel!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*pointing to the Apes*).

Why, even my head, too, begins to reel.

THE APES.

And if we make a lucky hit,
And if the words fall in and fit,
Thought's begot, and with the jingle
Seems to interweave and mingle.

FAUST (*as before*).

My breast is all on fire! Let us away!
Even now 'tis for my peace too late.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*still in the same position*).

Well, every one must own that they
Are candid poets, at any rate.

[*The caldron, which the She-Ape has neglected in the interim, begins to boil over; a great flame shoots out and rushes up the chimney. The* WITCH *comes shooting down the chimney with a horrible shriek.*

THE WITCH.

Au! Au! Au! Au!
Confounded beast! Accursèd sow!
Neglecting the caldron and singeing your dame, you
Beast accursèd, I'll brain you, I'll lame you!
[*Espying* FAUST *and* MEPHISTOPHELES.
What do I see here?
Who may you be here?
What do you seek here?
How did you sneak here?
May fire-pangs fierce
Your marrow pierce!

[*She dips the skimming ladle into the caldron, and sprinkles flames on* FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, *and the Apes. The Apes whimper.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*inverting the whisk, which he holds in his hand, and laying about with it among the glasses and pots*).

To smash! To smash,
With all your trash!
There goes your stew,
There goes your glass!
You see, we too
Our jest can pass!
You carrion, we
Can match your feat!

Good time, you see,
To your tune we beat!
[*As the* WITCH *recoils full of rage and amazement.*
Dost thou recognise me now?
Scarecrow! Atomy! Dost thou
Recognise thy lord and master?
What holds my hand, that I should not blast her?
Her and her monkey-sprites together?
Is all respect within thee dead
For me and for my doublet red?
Dost recognise not the cock's feather?
Have I so masked my face? My name
Must I on the house-tops proclaim?

THE WITCH.

Master, forgive my rough salute!
But yet I see no cloven foot:
And where may your two ravens be?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

For this time that apology
May pass; for 'tis, I can't forget,
A long while now since last we met.
Besides, the march of intellect,
Which into shape, as time runs on,
Is licking all the world, upon
The devil's self has had effect.
The northern goblin no more shocks the sense;
Horns, tails, and claws are things you never see:
As for the foot, with which I can't dispense,
That with society might injure me;
And therefore I for many years
Have, like young buckish cavaliers,
Among the upper circles gadded,
With calves most curiously padded.

THE WITCH (*dancing*).

I feel as if I were mad with sheer
Delight to see once more Dan Satan here!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Woman, that name offends my ear!

THE WITCH.

Wherefore? What wrong has it done you?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Tut!
It has been written down, for many a day,
With other things that men call fables; but
No whit the better off for that are they.
The Wicked One they certainly ignore,
But Wicked Ones are numerous as before.
If name I must have, call me Baron! That
Will do, although the title's somewhat flat.
A squire of quite as high degree
Am I, as any squire can be.
My gentle blood you doubt not; there
Is the escutcheon that I bear.
[*Makes an obscene gesture.*

THE WITCH (*laughs immoderately*).

Ha! ha! That's just like you! So clever!
Always the same mad wag as ever.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Mark this, my friend! Whate'er the hitch is,
This is the way to deal with witches.

THE WITCH.

Now, gentlemen, what is't you seek?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A bumper of your famous brew.
Your oldest, though, I must bespeak;
Years doubly efficacious make it.

THE WITCH.

Right gladly! Here's a flask! I take it
Myself at times in little sips;
All trace of stink has left it, too.
I'll give it cheerfully to you.
[*Aside to* MEPHISTOPHELES.
But him there, if it touch his lips,
Unless he's seasoned 'gainst its power,
You know, he cannot live an hour.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, he is an especial friend,
'Tis just the thing to serve his end.
The best your kitchen can produce
I do not grudge him for his use.
So draw your circle, and unroll
Your spells, and hand him out a brimming bowl!
[*The* WITCH, *with weird gestures, draws a circle, and places marvellous things within it; meanwhile the glasses begin to ring, the caldron to sound and make music. Last of all she fetches a great book, places the Apes within the circle, where she makes them serve as a reading-desk, and hold the torches. She beckons* FAUST *to approach.*

FAUST (*to* MEPHISTOPHELES).

What is all this to end in, say?
These mad paraphernalia,
These gestures and distortions frantic,
This mess of juggle and of antic,
I know them all too well of old,
And in profound aversion hold.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

All humbug! stuff to laugh at merely!
But do not take things too severely!
Being a doctor in her way,
She must some hocus-pocus play,
In order that on you her juice
May the desired effect produce.

[*He forces* FAUST *to enter the circle.*

THE WITCH (*with great emphasis declaims from her book*).

This must ye ken!
From one make ten,
Drop two, and then
Make three square, which
Will make you rich;
Skip o'er the four!
From five and six, —
In that the trick's, —
Make seven and eight,
And all is straight;
And nine is one,
And ten is none.
This is the witch's One Time's One!

FAUST.

The beldam's babble seems as it
Were ravings of a fever fit.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, there's a deal more yet to follow,
And just as solid, and as hollow;
The whole book clinks the self-same chime.
I know it well; and much good time
Have I lost o'er it, good and serious.
For downright contradiction pulls
As hard on wise men's brains, as fools'!
And unto both remains alike mysterious.
The trick's both old and new. The way
At all times was, as 'tis to-day,
By three and one, and one and three,
To preach up lies as simple sooth,
And sow broadcast by land and sea
Delusions in the place of truth.
So men talk on the nonsense they
Have ground into them in the schools;
And no one cares to say them nay,
For who'd perplex himself with fools?
Men, for the most part, when they hear
Words smite with vigour on their ear,
Believe that thought an entrance finds
Into the things they call their minds.

THE WITCH (*continues*).

Science is light!
But from the sight
Of all the world 'tis hidden.
Who seeks it not,
To him 'tis brought,
Unnoticed and unbidden.

FAUST.

What is this nonsense she is spouting?
My head will split anon. I seem to hear

A hundred thousand maniacs shouting
Their lunacies' full chorus in mine ear.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Enough! Enough! most admirable Sybil!
Dispense thy drink, and, mind, no paltry dribble!
Fill up the cup, ay, fill it to the brim!
My friend is safe, 'twill do no harm to him.
He's taken honours 'mongst us, ay, and quaffed
Full many a deep and most potential draught.

THE WITCH (*with many ceremonies pours the drink into a goblet. As* FAUST *raises it to his lips, a film of flame shoots out from it*).

Off with it! Leave no drop above!
'Twill warm the cockles of your heart!
What! with the devil hand and glove,
And yet at flame recoil and start?
[*The* WITCH *dissolves the circle.* FAUST *steps out.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Now, forth at once! To rest would mar all quite!

THE WITCH.

Your little drop will do you good, I trust.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to the* WITCH).

And, if in aught I can oblige you, just
Remind me of it on Walpurgis Night.

THE WITCH.

Here is a song! If you at times
Will sing it, you will find the rhymes

Produce upon you an effect
More singular than you expect.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Come! Come! Be guided for your good!
'Tis indispensable you should
Perspire, that so its influence may
Through all your vitals find its way.
Hereafter I will teach you how to prize
That prime distinction of noblesse,
Sheer lounging, listless idleness;
And soon you'll feel, with sweet surprise,
How Cupid gambols in the breast,
And flits and flutters there with exquisite unrest.

FAUST.

One glance into the mirror there!
That woman's form was all too fair!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Nay, nay! Thou shalt ere long behold
The paragon of womankind,
In feature perfect, and in mould
Warm, living, ay, and loving to your mind. [*Aside.*
With this draught in his body, he
In every wench a Helena will see.

SCENE IV. — *Street.*

FAUST, MARGARET (*passing along*).

FAUST.

My pretty lady, permit me, do,
My escort and arm to offer you!

MARGARET.

I'm neither a lady, nor pretty, and so
Can home without an escort go.
[*Breaks away from him and exit.*

FAUST.

By heaven, this girl is lovely! Ne'er
Have I seen anything so fair.
She is so pure, so void of guile,
Yet something snappish, too, the while.
Her lips' rich red, her cheeks' soft bloom,
Will haunt me to the day of doom!
The pretty way she droops her eyes
Has thrilled my heart in wondrous wise;
Her short sharp manner, half in fright,
'Twas charming, fascinating quite!
(*To* MEPHISTOPHELES, *who enters.*)
Hark, you must get that girl for me!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Get you that girl? Which do you mean?

FAUST.

She that went by but now.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What! She?
She has to her confessor been,
Who gave her — he could scarce do less —
Full absolution; I was there,
Lying ensconced behind his chair.
Though she had nothing to confess,
Nothing whatever, to him she went,
Poor thing, she is so innocent.
Over that girl I have no power.

FAUST.

Yet is she fourteen, every hour.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Spoken like Sir Rake, who would make prize
Of every dainty flower he spies,
And thinks all honours, favours, may
Be had for taking any day!
But this won't do in every case.

FAUST.

Ho, Master Graveairs, is it so?
Your sermonising's out of place.
And, in a word, I'd have you know,
Unless this very night shall see
This sweet young thing in my embrace,
All's at an end 'twixt you and me!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Think of the obstacles! I should
Require at least a fortnight good,
To bring about a meeting merely.

FAUST.

In half the time I'll undertake,
Without the devil's aid, to make
A chit like that adore me dearly.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why, by your talk, now, one might swear,
That you almost a Frenchman were!
But, pray, don't lose your temper so!
For where's the good, I'd like to know
Of rushing to enjoyment straight?

The pleasure's not by much so great,
As when you've first by every kind
Of foolish fondling to your mind
The doll contrived to knead and mould,
As many Italian tales have told.

FAUST.

My appetite, I tell you, wants
No such fantastic stimulants.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That may be; — but, apart all jest,
Or slight upon you, I protest,
With this young thing you'll ne'er succeed,
By pushing on at race-horse speed.
We cannot storm the town, in short,
So must to stratagem resort.

FAUST.

Fetch me some thing she's used to wear!
Her bedroom, introduce me there!
A kerchief from her bosom bring,
The darling's garter, anything!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That you may see I mean to spare
No pains to bring your suit to bear,
We shall not lose one moment, — nay,
We'll bring you to her room this very day.

FAUST.

And shall I see, — possess her?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No!
She will be with a neighbour. So
You may, quite undisturbed the while,
Within her atmosphere beguile
The time by dreaming, fancy free,
Of pleasures afterward to be.

FAUST.

Can we go there at once?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, no.
'Tis much too early yet to go.

FAUST.

Provide me with some present straight,
Which may her fancy captivate! [*Exit.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Presents? Oh, rare! He's sure to make a hit.
Full many a famous place I know,
And treasures buried long ago.
Well! I must look them up a bit.

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Evening.*

A tidily appointed little room.

MARGARET (*braiding and binding up her hair*).

Who was that gentleman? Heigho!
I would give something, now, to know.

He looked so frank and handsome, he
Of noble blood must surely be.
That much, at least, his forehead told;
He ne'er had ventured else to be so bold. [*Exit.*

MEPHISTOPHELES *and* FAUST *enter.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Come in as softly as you may!

FAUST (*after a pause*).

Leave me alone — alone, I pray!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*peering about the room*).

It is not every girl keeps things so neat. [*Exit.*

FAUST (*casting his eyes around*).

Welcome, thou twilight glimmer sweet,
Throughout this sanctuary shed!
Oh, love's delicious pain, that art
By dews of hope sustained and fed,
Take absolute possession of my heart!
How, all around, there breathes a sense
Of calm, of order, and content!
What plenty in this indigence!
In this low cell what ravishment!
[*Casts himself down upon a leathern armchair by the bedside.*
Receive me, thou, that hast with open arm
Held generations past in joy and moan!
Ah me! how often has a rosy swarm
Of children clung to this paternal throne!
Here did my love, perhaps, with grateful breast
For gifts the holy Christ-child brought her, stand,

Her chubby childish cheeks devoutly pressed
Against her aged grandsire's withered hand.
I feel thy spirit, maiden sweet,
Of order and contentment round me play,
That like a mother schools thee day by day,
Upon the table bids thee lay
The cover folded fresh and neat,
And strew the sand that crackles 'neath the feet.
Dear hand, that dost all things with beauty leaven,
Thou makest, like a god, this lowly home a heaven.
And here! [*Raises one of the curtains of the bed.*
What rapturous tremor shakes me now?
Here could I linger hours untold.
Here the incarnate angel thou,
O Nature, didst in airy visions mould;
Here lay the child, its gentle breast
Filled with warm life; and, hour by hour,
The bud, by hands divine caressed,
Expanded to the perfect flower!

And thou! What brings thee hither? I
Am stirred with strange emotion. Why?
What wouldst thou here? What weight so sore
Is this that presses on thy heart?
O hapless Faust, so changed thou art,
I know thee now no more, no more!

Is't some enchanted atmosphere
Encompasses, and charms me here?
Upon possession's bliss supreme
My soul till now was madly bent,
And now in a delicious dream
Of love I melt away content.
Is man, with all his powers so rare,
The sport of every gust of air?

And if she were to enter now,
How would your guilty soul her glances meet?
The mighty braggart, ah, how small! would bow,
Dissolved in abject terror, at her feet.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Despatch! She's coming to the door.

FAUST.

Hence! Hence! Here I return no more.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Here is a casket, laden well;
I got it, where? no need to tell.
If you will only place it there
Within the press — quick, quick! — I swear
She'll be beside herself with joy.
Some baubles there I've stowed away;
For toys we angle with a toy.
Pah! Child is child, and play is play.

FAUST.

I know not — shall I?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Can you ask it?
Perhaps you'd like to keep the casket!
In that case, friend, I would advise
Your lechery to economise
The precious hours, — give up the bubble,
And save myself all farther trouble.
You avaricious? You? Oh, no!

I won't believe that this is so.
I scratch my head — toil might and main —
[*He places the casket in the press and closes the lock.*
Let us be off! Psha! lingering still? —
The sweet young thing for to gain,
And bend her to your wish and will;
And here are you with face of gloom,
For all the world as if you were
Just entering your lecture-room,
And saw before you Physics there,
And Metaphysics grimly stare!
Come! Start! [*Exeunt.*

MARGARET (*enters with a lamp*).

It is so close, so sultry here! [*Opens the window.*
And yet outside 'twas rather chilly.
I feel, I can't tell how; oh, dear!
I wish that mother would come in.
I have a creeping all over my skin.
I'm such a frightened thing, — so silly!
[*Begins to sing as she undresses herself.*

In Thule dwelt a King, and he
Was leal unto the grave;
A cup to him of the red red gold
His leman dying gave.

He quaffed it to the dregs, whene'er
He drank among his peers,
And ever, as he drained it down,
His eyes would brim with tears.

And when his end drew near, he told
His kingdom's cities up,

Gave all his wealth unto his heir,
But with it not the cup.

He sat and feasted at the board,
His knights around his knee,
Within the palace of his sires,
Hard by the roaring sea.

Then up he rose, that toper old,
A long last breath he drew,
And down the cup he loved so well
Into the ocean threw.

He saw it flash, then settle down,
Down, down into the sea,
And, as he gazed, his eyes grew dim,
Nor ever again drank he.

[*She opens the press to put away her clothes, and discovers the casket.*

What's here? How comes this lovely casket thus?
I'm very confident I locked the press.
'Tis surely most mysterious!
What it contains I cannot guess.
In pledge for money lent, maybe,
'Tis with my mother left to keep?
A ribbon and a little key!
I've half a mind to take a peep.
What's this? Great heavens! All my days
The like of this I've never seen, —
Jewels and trinkets! Such a blaze
Might grace a duchess, ay, a queen!
On me how would the necklace sit?
Whose can they be, these braveries fine?

[*Puts on the trinkets and walks before the looking-glass.*

Oh, if the ear-rings were but mine!
In them one doesn't look the same a bit.
You may be young, you may be pretty;
All very nice and fine to view,
But nobody cares a straw for you,
And, if folks praise, 'tis half in pity.
For gold all strive,
For gold all wive.
'Tis gold rules all things 'neath the sun.
Alas! we poor folks that have none!

SCENE II. — *Public Promenade.*

FAUST *walking up and down wrapt in thought.*
To him MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

By love despised and its tortures fell!
By all the elements of hell!
Oh, would I only knew something worse,
That I might cram it into a curse!

FAUST.

What's wrong? What puts you in such case?
In all my life I ne'er saw such a face.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The devil's self if I were not,
I'd pitch myself to him on the spot!

FAUST.

What has befallen to rob you of your wits!
How well on you this maniac fury sits!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Just think — 'tis not to be endured —
The set of jewels I procured
For Margaret, a rascal priest
Has swept clean off, — he has, the beast!
Her mother of them got an inkling,
And fell to quaking in a twinkling.
The nose that woman has, you'd ne'er
Believe, for scenting all that's wrong.
Over her Book of Common Prayer
She snuffles, snuffles, all day long.
With sanctimonious scowl demure,
At every stick of furniture
She drops her nose to ascertain
If it be holy or profane.
So in the trinkets soon she spies
That not much of a blessing lies.
Quoth she, "All such unrighteous gear
Corrupts both body and soul, my dear.
So let us, then, this devil's bait
To Mary Mother consecrate,
And she, as recompense instead,
Will gladden us with heavenly bread."
Poor Gretchen pulled a long wry face.
"Gift horse!" thought she, "in any case!
And very godless he cannot be
Who brought it here so handsomely."
The mother for the parson sent,
Who heard her nonsense, and his eyes,
Be sure, they gleamed with a rare content,
When he beheld the glistening prize.
Quoth he, "A holy frame of mind!
Who conquers self leaves all behind!
The Church, for whom your gift is meant,
A stomach has most excellent.
Whole countries, land, and grange, and town,

She at a meal has swallowed down,
Yet ne'er, however gorged with pelf,
Was known to overeat herself.
The Church, my dears, alone with zest
Can such unrighteous gear digest."

FAUST.

That power it shares with not a few;
Your king, now, has it, eke your Jew.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

So saying, he swept off amain
Ring, necklace, bracelet, brooch, and chain,
With quite as unconcerned an air
As if they merely mushrooms were,
Treating my precious gems and casket
Like nuts so many in a basket;
And, promising that heaven no end
Of fair rewards to them would send,
He took his leave, and there they sat,
Immensely edified by that.

FAUST.

And Gretchen?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

She is all unrest,
And scarce knows what she'd like the best,
Thinks of the trinkets night and day,
And more of them that brought them — hey!

FAUST.

It pains me that my love should fret.
Fetch her at once another set!
The first were no great things. —

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Heyday!
All things are to my lord child's play.

FAUST.

Do what I wish, and quickly! Go!
Stick to her neighbour close. Be no
Mere milk-and-water devil, and get
Of these gewgaws another set.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That you desire it is enough. [*Exit* FAUST
Such lovesick fools away will puff
Sun, moon, and stars into the air,
And all to please their lady fair.

SCENE III. — *The Neighbour's House.*

MARTHA (*alone*).

My good man, God forgive me, he
Has acted scurvily by me,
To start away, the Lord knows where,
And leave me widowed, lone, and bare.
I never plagued him — God forbid! —
I loved him dearly, that I did. [*Weeps.*
Perhaps he's dead, though? Cruel fate!
Had I but some certificate,
The fact officially to state!

Enter MARGARET.

MARGARET.

Martha!

MARTHA.

What ails my pretty dear?

MARGARET.

I feel just like to drop. See here!
Another casket — nothing less —
Of ebony left in my press!
And things, so grand and fine, I feel
They're costlier than the first a deal.

MARTHA.

You must not let your mother know,
Or to the priest they, too, will go.

MARGARET.

Oh, see, now, see! Look at them, do!

MARTHA.

You lucky, lucky creature you!

MARGARET.

Alas! I never dare appear,
In the street or at church, in such fine gear.

MARTHA.

To me come often over, lass;
You can put them on, and nobody know;
Parade a good hour before the glass,
We'll have our own enjoyment so.
And then, if you'll but wait, no doubt
You're sure somehow to get a chance
Little by little to bring them out,
On holidays, or at a dance.

We'll manage it so as to make no stir;
A necklace first, and then the pearl
Ear-rings — your mother won't notice, girl;
We can always make out some story for her.

MARGARET.

But who could both the caskets bring?
There's something wrong about the thing.
[*A knock at the door.*
Good heavens! Should that be mother!

MARTHA.

Nay,
Some stranger 'tis — Come in!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*entering*).

I pray
Your pardon, ladies, for intruding thus,
'Tis most unceremonious.
[*Steps back respectfully on seeing* MARGARET.
Which may Dame Martha Schwerdtlein be?

MARTHA.

What is your pleasure? I am she.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside to her*).

Now that I know you, that will do.
You've quality, I see, with you.
Excuse the liberty I took:
In later in the day I'll look.

MARTHA (*aloud*).

Just think, the odd mistake he made! He
Fancied, child, you were a lady.

MARGARET.

A simple girl am I, and poor.
The gentleman's too kind, I'm sure.
These ornaments are not my own.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis not the ornaments alone;
The piercing glance, the air urbane —
How glad I am I may remain!

MARTHA.

Your news, sir? I'm all ears! How went it?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I would my tale were less distressing.
On me, I trust, you won't resent it?
Your husband's dead, and sends his blessing.

MARTHA.

Is dead? Poor darling! lackaday!
My husband's dead. I faint away!

MARGARET.

Oh, keep your heart up, dearest friend!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Hear the sad story to the end!

MARGARET.

'Tis things like this which make me pray
That fall in love I never may;
For such a loss, I do believe,
To death itself would make me grieve.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ah, joy goes hand in hand with care.

MARTHA.

But tell me how he died and where?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

In Padua his bones repose.
There, ma'am, in Saint Antonio's, —
The best of consecrated ground, —
A quiet corner he has found.

MARTHA.

But have you nought for me beside?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yes, one most weighty, huge request,
Three hundred masses to provide,
To sing his poor soul into rest.
Of all but this my pocket's bare.

MARTHA.

What! Not a luck-penny? What! Ne'er
A trinket, — token? Why, there's not
A handicraftsman but has got,
Somewhere within his wallet stored,
However bare, some little hoard,
Something to touch a body's heart with,
He'd sooner starve, or beg, than part with.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I feel for you, but let me say
His money was not fooled away.

Besides, he did his sins deplore,
But mourned his evil luck considerably more.

MARGARET.

Alas! that men should be so wretched! He
Shall for his soul's repose have many a prayer from me.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You are so good, so charming, you
Deserve a husband, ay, and quickly too.

MARGARET.

Ah, no! Too soon for that! I can't —

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well, till the husband comes, then, a gallant!
Heaven has no boon more sweet, more rare,
Than in one's arms to fold a thing so fair.

MARGARET.

That's not our country's usage, sir.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Usage or not, such things occur.

MARTHA.

Go on, sir

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I was at his side,
There by the bed on which he died,
A sorrier eyes never saw,
A mere dung-heap of rotten straw.
Yet still he made a Christian ending,
And found that, what with drink and spending,

He had run up a great deal more
Than he had thought for, on his score.
"How I detest myself!" cried he,
"For having so disgracefully
Deserted both my wife and calling.
The very thought on't is appalling!
It saps my life. Could I but know
That she forgives me, ere I die!"

MARTHA (*weeping*).

Dear heart! I — I forgave him long ago.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

"Still, God knows, she was more to blame than I."

MARTHA.

He lied there! What! To lie, the knave,
Upon the threshold of the grave!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

His latest gasps were spent in fiction,
That is my most profound conviction.
"Small time for idling had I," he said,
"First getting children, then getting them bread,
And clothing their backs, yet never had yet
A moment's quiet to eat my crust."

MARTHA.

Did he thus all my truth, my love, forget,
My drudging early and late?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Be just!
Not so. Of that in his dejection

He showed a touching recollection.
" When I," he said, " was leaving Malta, I
Prayed for my wife and children most devoutly.
Heaven so far blessed my prayers that by-and-by
We met a Turkish galley, took it stoutly.
It carried treasure for the Sultan. There
Valour for once had its reward, 'tis true,
And I received — and 'twas my simple due —
Of what we took a very handsome share."

MARTHA.

What? How? He hid it somewhere, I suppose?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Where the four winds have blown it now, who knows?
Strolling forlorn in Naples through the city,
A damsel on his loneliness took pity,
And such warm tenderness between them passed,
He bore its marks, poor saint, about him to the last.

MARTHA.

Wretch! To his children play the thief?
Not all his want, not all his grief,
Could check his shameless life.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ay, ma'am, but surely
'Twas this that killed him prematurely.
Now, were I in your place, I would
Mourn one chaste year of widowhood;
And look about meanwhile to find
A second husband to my mind.

MARTHA.

Ah me! With all his faults I durst
Not hope to find one like the first.
A kinder-hearted fool than he
'Twas scarcely possible to be.
His only fault was, that from home
He was too much inclined to roam,
Loved foreign women — filthy vice! —
And foreign wine, and those curst dice.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

How different might have been his state,
Had he, poor wretch, been equally
Forbearing and affectionate!
Treat me as well, and, I protest,
I'd ask you to change rings with me.

MARTHA.

O Lord, sir, you are pleased to jest!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

I'd best be off now! This absurd
Old fool would take the devil at his word.
[*To* MARGARET.
How is it with your heart? — Content?

MARGARET.

What mean you, sir?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Sweet innocent!
(*Aloud*) Ladies, farewell!

MARGARET.

Farewell!

MARTHA.

Before
You go, sir, give me one word more.
I'd like to have some proof to show
Where, how, and when my darling died,
And was interred. I've always tried
To be methodical, and so
'Twould comfort me, it would indeed,
Could I his death but in the papers read.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, certainly, good madam, I
Your wish at once can gratify.
One witness by another backed,
All the world over, proves a fact.
I have a friend in town here, who will state
What you require before the magistrate.
I'll bring him here with me.

MARTHA.

Oh, do, sir, pray!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And this young lady will be with you, eh?
A fine young fellow! A great traveller! Quite
A ladies' man, — especially polite.

MARGARET.

I'd sink with shame before him, sir.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No! Not before an emperor.

MARTHA.

At dusk in my back garden we
You and your friend will hope to see.

SCENE IV. — *Street.*

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES.

FAUST.

What speed? Will't work? What of my dear?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Bravo! So hot? You'll shortly bring
Your quarry down. This evening
At neighbour Martha's shall you see her!
That is a woman made express
To play the pimp and procuress.

FAUST.

Good! Good!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

But there is something, too,
That she requires of us to do.

FAUST.

Well, one good turn deserves another.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We
Have to depone — a mere formality —
That stiff and stark her husband's carcass lies
In Padua in holy ground.

FAUST.

Most wise!
Why, we must make the journey first, of course?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Sancta simplicitas! No need of that! You just
Speak to the facts, and take them upon trust.

FAUST.

The game is up, if that's the sole resource.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

O holy man! is this your cue?
Is this the first time in your life that you
Have borne false witness? Have you not
In language the most positive defined
God, the world, all that moves therein, mankind,
His capabilities of feeling, thought,
Ay, done it with a breast undashed
By faintest fear, a forehead unabashed?
Yet tax yourself, and you must own that you
As much in truth about these matters knew
As of Herr Schwerdtlein's death you do.

FAUST.

Liar and sophist, thou wilt be
Liar and sophist to the close!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, certainly, could one not see
A little farther before one's nose.
To-morrow will not you — of course,
In all integrity! — beguile
Poor Margaret, and your suit enforce,
By swearing all your soul hangs on her smile?

FAUST.

And from my heart I'd speak.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

O specious art!
You'll talk about eternal truth and love,
Of passion, all control, all change, above;
Will this, too, come quite purely from the heart?

FAUST.

Peace, fiend! it will! What! If I feel,
And for that feeling, frenzy, flame,
I seek, but cannot find a name,
Then through the round of nature reel,
With every sense at fever heat,
Snatching at all sublimest phrases,
And call this fire, that in me blazes,
Endless, eternal, ay, eternal, —
Is this mere devilish deceit,
Devised to dazzle, and to cheat?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yet am I right.

FAUST.

Thou fiend infernal!
Hear me! And mark, too, what I say,

So spare these lungs of mine, I pray.
He that's resolved he's in the right,
And has but tongue enough, is quite
Secure to gain his point. But come,
This babblement grows wearisome.
Right, then, thou art. I grant it, just
Because I cannot choose but must.

SCENE V. — *Garden.*

MARGARET *on* FAUST'S *arm.* MARTHA *with* MEPHISTOPHELES *walking up and down.*

MARGARET.

You only bear with me, I'm sure you do,
You stoop, to shame me, you so wise.
You travellers are so used to view
All things you come across with kindly eyes.
I know my poor talk can but weary such
A man as you, that must have known so much.

FAUST.

One glance, one word of thine, to me is more
Than all this world's best wisdom — all its lore.
[*Kisses her hand.*

MARGARET.

Oh, no, sir, no! How can you kiss it? 'Tis
So coarse, so hard — it is not fit —
The things I've had to do with it!
Mother's too niggardly — indeed she is.
[*They pass on.*

MARTHA.

And you, like this, are always travelling, sir?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Business, alas! and duty force us. Ah! what pain
It costs a man from many a place to stir,
Where yet his fate forbids him to remain!

MARTHA.

'Tis very well to rove this way
About the world when young, and strong, and brave.
But soon or later comes the evil day;
And to go crawling on into the grave
A stiff old lonely bachelor, — that can
Never be good for any man.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I shudder, thinking such may be my fate.

MARTHA.

Then, sir, be wise, before it is too late. [*They pass on.*

MARGARET.

Yes! Out of sight is out of mind!
Politeness costs you nothing. Why,
You've friends in plenty, good and kind,
And they have far more sense than I.

FAUST.

Oh, best of creatures, trust me, the pretence
Of that which passes with the world for sense
More frequently is neither more nor less
Than self-conceit and narrow-mindedness.

MARGARET.

How so?

FAUST.

Ah! That simplicity
And innocence will never recognise
Themselves, and all their worth so holy!
That meekness and a spirit lowly,
The highest gifts, that Nature's free
And loving bounty can devise —

MARGARET.

A little moment only think of me;
I shall have time enough to think of you.

FAUST.

You're much alone, then?

MARGARET.

Yes! 'Tis true,
Our household's small, but still, you see,
It wants no little looking to.
We have no maid; so I've to do
The cooking, sewing, knitting, sweeping;
I'm on my feet from morn till night,
And mother's so exacting, and so tight
In her housekeeping.
Not that she needs to pinch so close. We might
Much more at ease than other people be.
My father left us, when he died,
A cottage with some garden ground, outside
The town, a tidy bit of property.
But now I am not near so sore bestead.
My brother is away — a soldier he.
My little sister's dead.
Ah! with the child I had a world of trouble.
And yet, and yet, I'd gladly undergo

It all again, though it were double,
I loved the darling so.

FAUST.

An angel, sweet, if it resembled you!

MARGARET.

I brought it up, and, do you know,
It loved me with a love so true!
My father died before 'twas born,
We gave up mother for lost; her fit
Left her so wasted, and so forlorn,
And very, very slow she mended, bit by bit.
She could not, therefore, dream herself
Of suckling the poor little elf;
And so I nursed it all alone,
On milk and water, till at last
It grew my very own.
Upon my arm, within my breast,
It smiled, and crowed, and grew so fast.

FAUST.

You must have felt most purely blest.

MARGARET.

Oh, yes! Still I had many things to try me.
The baby's cradle stood at night
Beside my bed: if it but stirred, I would
Awake in fright.
One time I had to give it drink or food,
Another time to lay it by me;
Then, if it had a crying fit,
Out of my bed I needs must get,
And up and down the room go dandling it;
And yet

Be standing at the wash-tub by daybreak,
Then do the marketing, set the house to rights:
And so it went on, mornings, middays, nights,
Always the same! Such things will make
One's spirits not at all times of the best,
Still they give relish to our food, our rest.

[*They pass on.*

MARTHA.

Poor women get the worst on't, though. A dry
Old bachelor's not easy to convert.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Would one like you but make the trial, I
My wicked ways might soon desert.

MARTHA.

Frankly, now! Is there no one you have met?
Has not your heart formed some attachment yet?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What says the proverb? A hearth of one's own,
And a housewife good, it is well known,
Are better than gold or precious stone.

MARTHA.

I mean, sir, have you never had a liking?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The favour shown me everywhere is striking.

MARTHA.

I wished to say, your heart, has it
Never been conscious of a serious feeling?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Madam, a jesting mood were most unfit,
Not to say dangerous, when with ladies dealing.

MARTHA.

Ah, you don't understand what I'd be at.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I'm grieved most heartily for that.
But this is quite clear to my mind,
That you are very, very kind. [*They pass on.*

FAUST.

When I came in, you little angel, then,
You knew me at a glance again?

MARGARET.

Did you not see? I could not meet your look.

FAUST.

And you forgive the liberty I took,
The mad impertinence which prompted me
To stop you on the street the other day,
As you came out from the Cathedral door?

MARGARET.

It took me quite aback. What could it be?
Nothing like this had e'er occurred before.
No one of me an evil word could say.
And then it crossed my thoughts: "Alas, the day!
Can he about me anything have seen
Bold or unmaidenly in look or mien?"

It seemed as if the thought had struck you — She
Is just the girl with whom one can make free!
Let me confess the truth! Not then I knew
What in your favour here began to stir;
But with myself I was right angry, sir,
That I could not be angrier with you.

FAUST.

Sweet love!

MARGARET.

Stay!
[*She plucks a star-flower, and picks off the petals, one after the other.*

FAUST.

What is this? A nosegay?

MARGARET.

No!
Only a game.

FAUST.

A game?

MARGARET.

You'll mock me — Go!

FAUST.

What is it thou art murmuring? What?

MARGARET.

He loves me, loves me not.

FAUST.

I guess!
Angelic creature!

MARGARET.

Loves me not,
Loves me — not — he loves me!

FAUST.

Yes!
Let what this flower has told thee be
A revelation as from heaven to thee!
Speak to me, dearest! Dost thou comprehend
All that these simple words portend?
He loves me! [*Seizes both her hands.*

MARGARET.

I am all a-tremble!

FAUST.

Oh, do not tremble! Let this look,
This pressure of the hand, proclaim to thee
What words can never speak; what bids us now
Surrender soul and sense, to feel
A rapture which must be eternal?
Eternal, for its end would be despair!
No, no, no end! No end!
[MARGARET *presses his hands, breaks from him, and runs off. He stands for a moment in thought, then follows her.*

MARTHA (*advancing*).

'Tis growing dark!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yes, and we must away.

MARTHA.

I'd ask you longer here to stay
Were this not such a wicked place.
Folks seem to have nought else to do, I vow,
Or think about, except to play
The spy upon their neighbours — how
They rise, lie down, come in, go out;
And, take what heed one may, in any case
One's certain to get talked about.
But our young couple?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

They have flown
Up yonder walk. The giddy butterflies!

MARTHA.

Quite fond of her, methinks, he's grown.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And she of him. Could it be otherwise?

SCENE VI. — *A Summer-house.*

MARGARET *runs in, places herself behind the door, holds the tip of her finger to her lips, and peeps through the crevice.*

MARGARET.

He's coming

FAUST.

Did you fancy you
Could give me so the slip? Ah, then,
I've caught you, rogue! [*Kisses her.*

MARGARET (*embracing him and returning the kiss*).

Oh, best of men,
I love thee, from my heart I do.
[MEPHISTOPHELES *knocks*

FAUST (*stamping his foot*).

Who's there?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Your friend!

FAUST.

Beast, beast!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis time to go.

MARTHA (*comes up*).

Yes, sir, 'tis late.

FAUST.

Mayn't I escort you?

MARGARET.

No!
My mother would — Farewell!

FAUST.

Must I begone?
Farewell!

MARTHA.

Adieu!

FAUST.

To meet again anon!
[*Exeunt* FAUST *and* MEPHISTOPHELES.

MARGARET.

Dear God! The things of every kind
A man like this has in his mind!
I stand before him dashed and shy,
And say to all he speaks of, yes.
In such a simple child as I,
What he should see, I cannot guess.

SCENE VII. — *Forest and Cavern.*

FAUST (*alone*).

Majestic spirit, thou hast given me all
For which I prayed. Thou not in vain didst turn
Thy countenance to me in fire and flame.
Thou glorious Nature for my realm hast given,
With power to feel, and to enjoy her. Thou
No mere cold glance of wonder hast vouchsafed,
But lett'st me peer deep down into her breast,
Even as into the bosom of a friend.
Before me thou in long procession lead'st
All things that live, and teachest me to know
My kindred in still grove, in air, and stream.
And, when the storm sweeps roaring through the woods,
Upwrenching by the roots the giant pines,
Whose neighbouring trunks, and intertangled boughs,
In crashing ruin tear each other down,
And shake with roar of thunder all the hills,
Then dost thou guide me to some sheltering cave,
There show'st me to myself, and mine own soul
Teems marvels forth I weened not of before.
And when the pure moon, with her mellowing light,
Mounts as I gaze, then from the rocky walls,
And out from the dank underwood, ascend

Forms silvery-clad of ages long ago,
And soften the austere delight of thought.

Oh, now I feel no perfect boon is e'er
Achieved by man. With this ecstatic power,
Which brings me hourly nearer to the gods,
A yokemate thou hast given me, whom even now
I can no more dispense with, though his cold
Insulting scorn degrades me to myself,
And turns thy gifts to nothing with a breath.
Within my breast he fans unceasingly
A raging fire for that bewitching form.
So to fruition from desire I reel,
And 'midst fruition languish for desire.

[*Enter* MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What! Not yet weary of this life of quiet?
How can it charm you such a while? Pooh, pooh!
'Tis very well once in a way to try it;
And then away again to something new!

FAUST.

Would thou hadst something else to do,
Than tease me when I would be still!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, I will leave you, if you will,
And leave you very gladly, too.
No need to be so very cross.
A surly peevish mate like you
Is truly little of a loss.
My hands are full from morn till night,
And yet by look or sign you won't
Let me divine what's wrong or right,
What things you like, and what you don't.

FAUST.

The true tone hit exactly! He
Wants to be thanked for boring me.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why, without me, poor son of clay,
What sort of life would you have led?
I've cured that brain of yours, this many a day,
Of the whim-whams your sickly fancy bred;
And from this ball of earth you clean away
Had, but for me, long, long ago been sped.
Is it for you to mope and scowl
In clefts and caverns, like an owl?
Or, like a toad, lap nourishment
From oozy moss, and dripping stones?
Oh, pastime rare and excellent!
The doctor still sticks in your bones.

FAUST.

Dost comprehend what stores of fresh life-force
I gain in roaming thus by wold and waste?
Ay, couldst thou but divine it, thou, of course,
Art too much fiend such bliss to let me taste.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A super-earthly ecstasy! To camp
On mountains in the dark, and dews, and damp!
In transports to embrace the earth and sky,
Yourself into a deity inflate,
Pierce the earth's marrow by the light of high,
Unreasoning presentiments innate,
Feel in your breast the whole six days' creation,
And, in the pride of conscious power, to glow
With quite incomprehensible elation;
Anon with lover's raptures to o'erflow

Into the Universal All, with now
No vestige left to mark the child of clay.
This trance ecstatic, glorious in its way,
All winding up at last — [*With a gesture.*
I sha'n't say how!

FAUST.

Shame on thee!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, that shocks you! You have so
Much right with moral horror to cry shame!
One must not dare to squeamish ears to name
What, natheless, squeamish hearts will not forego.
Well, well, I grudge you not the satisfaction
Of lying to yourself upon occasion:
That sort of thing soon loses its attraction;
You'll tire of it, and without my persuasion.
To your old whims you're falling back again,
And 'tis most certain, if I let you,
They'll into madness lash your brain,
Or into horrors and blue-devils fret you.
Enough of this! At home your darling sits,
And all with her's vacuity and sadness.
She cannot get you from her mind. Her wit's
Bewitched; she dotes on you to madness.
At first your passion, like a little brook,
Swollen by the melted snows, all barriers overbore;
Into her heart you've poured it all, and, look!
That little brook of yours is dry once more.
Methinks, instead of playing king
Among the woods, your lordship might
Be doing better to requite
The poor young monkey's hankering.
Time drags with her so sadly; she, poor wight,

Stands at her window, marks with listless eye
The clouds o'er the old city walls go sweeping by.
"Oh, if a birdie I might be!" So runs her song
Half through the night, and all day long;
One while she's gay, though mostly she's downcast,
At other times she's pumped quite dry of tears,
Then to appearance calm again, but first and last
In love o'er head and ears.

FAUST.

Serpent! Serpent!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

Oh, I bear you!
So that only I ensnare you!

FAUST.

Out of my sight! Accursèd thing!
Dare not to name her! Nor before
My half-distracted senses bring
Desire for her sweet body more!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What's to be done? She thinks you gone for ever!
And in a manner so you are.

FAUST.

I'm near her, ay, but were I ne'er so far,
I never can forget, can lose her never.
I envy even the Host itself, whene'er
'Tis touched by those sweet lips of hers!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Indeed!
Well, friend, I've often envied you the pair
Of dainty twins that midst the roses feed.

FAUST.

Hence, pimp!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, rare! You rail, and I must laugh.
The God who fashioned lad and wench
Knew what He meant too well by half,
His noble purpose not to clench
By fashioning occasion due
For bringing them together, too.
Away! 'Tis such a cruel case!
'Tis to your mistress' chamber, man, you go,
And not, methinks, to your undoing.

FAUST.

What were heaven's bliss itself in her embrace?
Though on her bosom I should glow,
Must I not feel her pangs, her ruin?
What am I but an outcast, without home,
Or human tie, or aim, or resting-place,
That like a torrent raved along in foam,
From rock to rock, with ravening fury wild,
On to the brink of the abyss? And she,
In unsuspecting innocence a child,
Hard by that torrent's banks, in tiny cot,
Upon her little patch of mountain lea,
With all her homely joys and cares, begot
And bounded in that little world!
And I, the abhorred of God,—'twas not
Enough that down with me I whirled
The rifted rocks, and shattered them! I must

Drag her, her and her peace, into the dust!
Thou, Hell, must have this sacrifice perforce!
Help, devil, then, to abridge my torturing throes.
Let that which must be swiftly take its course,
Bring her doom down on me, to crown my woes,
And o'er us both one whelming ruin close!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ho, up at boiling point again!
Get in, fool, and console her! When
Such silly pates no outlet can descry,
They think the very crash of doom is nigh.
Give me the man that on will go,
Not to be swayed or shaken from his level!
And yet at other times you show
A tolerable spice, too, of the devil.
Go to! The devil that despairs I deem
Of all poor creatures poor in the extreme.

SCENE VIII. — MARGARET'S *Room*.

MARGARET (*at her spinning-wheel, alone*).

My peace is gone,
My heart is sore;
'Tis gone for ever
And evermore.

Where he is not,
Is the grave to me,
The whole world's changed,
Ah, bitterly.

I sit and I ponder
One only thought,

My senses wander,
  My brain's distraught.

My peace is gone,
  My heart is sore;
'Tis gone for ever
  And evermore.

From my window to greet him
  I gaze all day,
I stir out, if meet him
  I only may.

His noble form,
  His bearing high,
His mouth's sweet smile,
  His mastering eye;

And the magic flow
  Of his talk, the bliss
In the clasp of his hand,
  And oh! his kiss!

My peace is gone,
  My heart is sore;
'Tis gone for ever
  And evermore.

For him doth my bosom
  Cry out and pine;
Oh, if I might clasp him,
  And keep him mine!

And kiss him, kiss him,
  As fain would I,
I'd faint on his kisses,
  Yes, faint and die!

Scene IX. — Martha's *Garden*.

Margaret, Faust.

MARGARET.

Promise me, Henry!

FAUST.

What I can, I will.

MARGARET.

How do you stand about religion, say?
You are a thoroughly good man, but still
I fear you don't think much about it anyway.

FAUST.

Hush, hush, my child! You feel I love you, — good!
For those I love could lay down life, and would.
No man would I of creed or church bereave.

MARGARET.

That is not right; we must ourselves believe.

FAUST.

Must we?

MARGARET.

Ah! could I but persuade you, dear!
You do not even the sacraments revere.

FAUST.

Revere I do.

MARGARET.

But seek them not, alas!
For long you've never gone to shrift or mass.
Do you believe in God?

FAUST.

Love, who dare say
I do believe in God? You may
Ask priest or sage, and their reply
Will only seem to mystify,
And mock you.

MARGARET.

Then you don't believe?

FAUST.

My meaning, darling, do not misconceive.
Him who dare name?
Or who proclaim,
Him I believe?
Who feel,
Yet steel
Himself to say, Him I do not believe?
The All-Embracer,
The All-Sustainer,
Embraces and sustains He not
Thee, me, Himself?
Rears not the heaven its arch above?
Doth not the firm-set earth beneath us lie?
And with the tender gaze of love
Climb not the everlasting stars on high?
Do I not gaze upon thee, eye to eye?
And all the world of sight and sense and sound,
Bears it not in upon thy heart and brain,
And mystically weave around
Thy being influences that never wain?

Fill thy heart thence even unto overflowing,
And when with thrill ecstatic thou art glowing,
Then call it whatsoe'er thou wilt,
Bliss! Heart! Love! God!
Name for it have I none!
Feeling is all in all;
Name is but sound and smoke,
Shrouding heaven's golden glow!

MARGARET.

All this is beautiful and good; just so
The priest, too, speaks to us at times,
In words, though, somewhat different.

FAUST.

So speak the hearts of all men in all climes,
O'er which the blessèd sky is bent,
On which the blessèd light of heaven doth shine.
Each in a language that is his;
Then why not I in mine?

MARGARET.

To hear you speak, it looks not much amiss,
But still there's something, love, about it wrong;
For Christian you are not, I see.

FAUST.

Dear child!

MARGARET.

My heart has ached for long,
To see you in such company.

FAUST.

How so?

MARGARET.

The man that is your mate
Wakes in my inmost soul the deepest hate.
In all my life not anything
Has given my heart so sharp a sting
As that man's loathsome visage grim.

FAUST.

Nay, dearest, have no fear of him.

MARGARET.

His presence makes my blood congeal.
Kindly to all men else I feel;
But howsoe'er for you I long,
From that man with strange dread I shrink;
That he's a knave I needs must think.
God pardon me, if I do him wrong!

FAUST.

Such odd fish there must always be.

MARGARET.

I would not live with such as he.
Whenever he comes, he's sure to peer
In at the door with such a sneer,
Half angry-like with me.
That he in no one thing takes part, is clear;
On his brow 'tis written, as on a scroll,
That he can love no human soul.
I feel so happy within thy arms,
So free, so glowing, so fearless of harms,
But in his presence my heart shuts to.

FAUST.

You sweet, foreboding angel, you!

MARGARET.

It masters me in such a way,
I even think, when he comes near,
That I no longer love you, dear.
If he were by, I never could pray,
And that eats into my heart; you, too,
Must feel, my Henry, as I do.

FAUST.

'Tis mere antipathy you bear.

MARGARET.

Now I must go.

FAUST.

Oh, can I ne'er
Hang one short hour in quiet on thy breast,
Bosom by bosom, soul in soul caressed?

MARGARET.

Ah, if I only slept alone! To-night
I'd leave the door upon the latch, I would.
But mother sleeps so very light,
And, were we caught by her, I should
Drop dead upon the spot, I vow.

FAUST.

She need not know, thou angel, thou!
Here is a phial! Let her but take
Three drops of this, and it will steep
Nature in deep and pleasing sleep.

MARGARET.

What would I not do for thy sake?
Thou'rt sure it will not do her harm?

FAUST.

Would I advise it, else?

MARGARET.

There's some strange charm,
When I but look on you, that still
Constrains me, love, to do your will.
I have already done so much for you,
That scarce aught else is left for me to do. [*Exit.*

Enter MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The silly ape! Is't gone?

FAUST.

So, then,
Thou hast been playing spy again?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I heard distinctly all that passed.
You had, sir doctor, first and last,
A stiffish dose of catechising.
I'm sure, I hope 'twill do you good!
It certainly is not surprising
These silly-pated wenches should
Be always anxious to discover
If in his prayers and pace their lover
Jogs on the good old humdrum way.
"If pliable in that," think they,
"Us too he'll placidly obey."

FAUST.

Thou monster, thou dost not perceive
How such a loving faithful soul,
Full of her faith, which is
To her the one sole pledge of endless bliss,
Is racked by pious anguish, to believe
Him that she dotes on doomed to everlasting dole.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thou supersensual sensualist, a flirt,
A doll, a dowdy, leads thee by the nose.

FAUST.

Thou vile abortion thou of fire and dirt!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What skill in physiognomy she shows!
She turns, she can't tell how, when I am present;
This little mask of mine, it seems, reveals
Meanings concealed, but certainly unpleasant;
That I'm a genius, past mistake she feels:
The devil's self, perhaps, for aught she knows.
Well, well, to-night!

FAUST.

What's that to you?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oho! In that I have my pleasure, too.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *At the Well.*

MARGARET *and* BESSY *with pitchers.*

BESSY.

What! Barbara? Not heard the news of her?

MARGARET.

Not I. Across the door I rarely stir.

BESSY.

Oh, never doubt it!
To-day Sibylla told me all about it!
She's made a rare fool of herself at last.
This comes of her fine airs and flighty jinks!

MARGARET.

How so?

BESSY.

It won't keep down. That's long, long past.
She feeds for two now, when she eats and drinks.

MARGARET.

Alas!

BESSY.

She's rightly served, the jade!
For all the fuss she with the fellow made!

Such gadding here, such gadding there,
At village wake, at dance, and fair;
Must be first fiddle, too, everywhere;
He was treating her always with tarts and wine;
Set up for a beauty, she did, so fine,
And yet was so mean, and so lost to shame,
She took his presents, though, all the same.
And then the hugging, and the kissing!
So the upshot is, her rose is missing.

MARGARET.

Poor thing!

BESSY.

What! Pity her, and her sinning!
When any of us was at the spinning,
Mother kept us indoors after dark.
But she was so sweet upon her spark,
On the bench by the door, and in the dark walk,
No hour was too long for their toying and talk.
So her fine fal-lals now my lady may dock,
And do penance at church in the sinner's smock.

MARGARET.

But he will make her his wife, of course!

BESSY.

A fool if he did! A lad of mettle
Can have lots of choice, or ever he settle.
Besides, he's off.

MARGARET.

How could he do it?

BESSY.

If she should get him, she's sure to rue it.
The boys will tear her garland, and we
Strew chopped straw at her door, you'll see. [*Exit.*

MARGARET (*going home*).

What railing once rose to my lip,
If any poor girl made a slip!
My tongue hard words could scarcely frame
Enough to brand another's shame.
It looked so black, that blacken it
Howe'er I might, they seemed unfit
To stamp its blackness infinite.
I blessed myself and my nose uptossed,
And now I, too, in sin am lost.
And yet, — and yet, — alas! the cause,
God knows, so good, so dear, it was!

SCENE II. — ZWINGER.

In the niche of the wall a devotional image of the Mater Dolorosa, *and in front of it pots of flowers.*

MARGARET (*placing fresh flowers in the pots*).

Oh, thou, the sorest
Pangs that borest,
On mine look down with face benign!

With anguish eying
Thy dear Son dying,
The sword that pierced His heart in thine.

Thou to the Father gazest,
And sighs upraisest,
For His and for thy mortal pine.

Oh, who can feel, as thou,
Thy agony, that now
Tears me and wears me to the bone!
How this poor heart is choked with tears,
All that it yearns for, all it fears,
Thou knowest, thou, and thou alone!

Still wheresoe'er I go,
What woe, what woe, what woe
Is in my bosom aching!
When to my room I creep,
I weep, I weep, I weep;
My heart is breaking.

The bow-pots at my window
I with my tears bedewed,
When over them at morn, to pluck
These flowers for thee, I stood.

Brightly into my chamber shone
The sun, when dawn grew red;
Already there, all woebegone,
I sat upon my bed.

Help, sufferer divine!
Save me, oh, save
From shame and from the grave!
And thou, the sorest
Pangs that borest,
On mine look down with countenance benign!

SCENE III. — *Night.*

Street in front of MARGARET'S *door.*

VALENTINE.

At drinking-bouts, when tongues will wag,
And many are given to boast and brag,
When praises of their own pet dears
Were dinned by comrades in my ears,
And drowned in bumpers, I was able,
My elbow planted on the table,
To bide my time, and calmly stayed,
Listening to all their gasconade.
Then with a smile my beard I'd stroke,
And take a full glass in my hand;
"Each to his fancy!" up I spoke,
"But who is there in all the land
To match with my dear Gretel, — who
Is fit to tie my sister's shoe?"
All round the room there went a hum,
Hob, nob! Kling! Klang! "He's right!" they cried
"Of her whole sex she is the pride."
Then all the boasters, they sat dumb.
And now — oh, I could tear my hair,
And dash my brains out in despair! —
Now every knave will think he's free
To have his gibe and sneer at me!
And, like a bankrupt debtor, I
At each chance word must sit and fry.
Smash them all up I might: what though?
I could not call them liars, — no!

What's here? Ha! skulking out of view?
If I mistake not, there are two.
If it be he, at him I'll drive;
He shall not quit this spot alive!

Enter FAUST *and* MEPHISTOPHELES.

FAUST.

How from the window of yon sacristy
The little lamp's undying flame doth glimmer,
While at the sides it flickers dim and dimmer,
And thicks the darkness round! Ah, me!
Such midnight is it in my breast.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And I feel like a tom-cat, love distressed,
That up fire-ladders slily crawls,
And steals on tiptoe round the walls;
I burn with quite a virtuous glow,
Half thievish joy, half concupiscence, so
Does the superb Walpurgis Night
Already thrill me with delight.
Just one night more, 'tis here, and then
One gets some real fun again.

FAUST.

Look! What is that is glimmering there?
The treasure rising to the upper air?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thou shalt ere long the pleasure test
Of digging up the little chest.
I took a squint at it to-night.
Such lion-dollars broad and bright!

FAUST.

How! Not a trinket? Not a ring,
To deck her out, my love, my sweet?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I think I saw with them a string
Of pearls, or something just as neat.

FAUST.

'Tis well! It vexes me to go
To her without some gift to show.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis not a thing to feel dismay for,
To have some pleasure you don't pay for!
Now heaven with stars is all aglow.
A genuine tidbit you shall hear;
A moral song I'll sing her, so
More thoroughly to befool the dear.

(*Sings to the lute.*)

Katrina, say,
What makes you stay,
Ere dawn of day,
Before your sweetheart's door so?
Away, away!
The springald gay
Lets in a May,
Goes out a May no more so!

Walk still upright!
If once you're light,
Why then, Good-night!
Poor things, 'twill ill bestead you.
Refrain, refrain!
Let no false swain
Your jewel gain,
Till with the ring he wed you!

VALENTINE (*coming forward*).

For whom are you caterwauling? Curst
Ratcatcher you! Out, trusty whinger!
To the devil with the jingler first,
Then packing after it send the singer!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The lute is cracked! 'Tis ruined for the nonce.

VALENTINE.

Have at you! Now to crack your sconce!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Tackle him, doctor! Courage, hey!
Stick close, and, as I bid you, do.
Out with your duster! Thrust away!
I'll do the parrying for you.

VALENTINE.

Then parry that!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And wherefore not?

VALENTINE.

That too!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Just so.

VALENTINE.

I'd swear the devil fought!
What say you, then, to that? My hand's benumbed.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Thrust home!

VALENTINE.

Oh, oh!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The bumpkin has succumbed.
Let us be off! We must evaporate!
The hue and cry is up! Hark! What a clatter!
With the police I might make things all straight,
But with the courts 'tis quite another matter!
[*Exeunt*

MARTHA (*at window*).

Help! Murder!

MARGARET (*at window*).

Help! A light! A light!

MARTHA (*as before*).

They brawl and scuffle, shout and fight.

PEOPLE.

Here's one of them already dead.

MARTHA (*coming out*).

The murdering villains! Have they fled?

MARGARET (*coming out*).

Who's this, lies here?

PEOPLE.

Your mother's son.

MARGARET.

Almighty God! I am undone.

VALENTINE.

I'm dying! Sooner done than said.
Why, women, why do ye
Stand howling, whimpering there? I'm sped!
Come close, and list to me!
[*All come round him.*
Look, Gretchen! You're but young, — by far
Too shy and simple yet! You are
A bungler in your trade.
Soft in your ear a friendly hint!
You are a whore; so never stint,
But be right out a jade.

MARGARET.

Brother! Great God! What mean you?

VALENTINE.

Shame!
Out of your antics leave God's name!
What's done, alas the day! is done,
And you must run the course of sin.
You on the sly begin with one,
But several soon come trooping in,
And, once you to a dozen fall so,
Soon all the town will have you also!

When shame is born, she's to the light
Brought stealthily 'mid grief and fears,
And she is in the veil of night
Wrapped over head and ears.
Yea, folks would kill her an' they might,
But grown, as grow she will apace,
She flaunts it in the broad daylight,
And yet she wears no fairer face.
Nay, it grows uglier every way,
The more she seeks the light of day.

I see the time — 'tis coming — when
Each honest-hearted citizen,
As from a plague-infected corpse,
Will turn aside from thee, thou whore!
Thy heart will fail thee with remorse,
When people look thee in the face.
No more thou'lt wear a golden chain;
Nor stand in church by the altar floor,
Nor in a collar of dainty lace
Shine foremost at the dance again.
In some dark wretched nook thou'lt hide,
With cripples and beggars and nought beside;
And even though God forgiveness grant thee,
My curse upon the earth will haunt thee!

MARTHA.

Commend your soul to God! Would you
Lay on it the sin of slander, too?

VALENTINE.

Thou shameless bawd, could I but smite
Thy wizened carcass, then I might
For all my sins of every kind
Full absolution hope to find.

MARGARET.

Oh, brother! Rack me not, oh, pray!

VALENTINE.

Have done with tears! Have done, I say!
To honour when you bade farewell,
You dealt my heart its heaviest blow.
Now like a soldier, stout and fell,
Through Death's long sleep to God I go.

SCENE IV. — *Cathedral.*

SERVICE, ORGAN, AND ANTHEM.

MARGARET *amongst a number of people.* EVIL SPIRIT *behind her.*

EVIL SPIRIT.

How different, Margaret, was't with thee,
When thou, still, still all innocence,
Camest to the altar here,
And from the well-thumbed little book
Didst prattle prayers that were
Half childish playfulness,
Half God within the heart.
Margaret!
How is it with thy head?
Within thy heart
What guiltiness?
Art praying for thy mother's soul, that slept
Away to long, long agonies through thee?
Upon thy threshold whose the blood? —
And 'neath thy heart stirs not
What now is quickening there,
And with its boding presence racks
Itself and thee?

MARGARET.

Woe! Woe!
Oh, could I rid me of the thoughts
That, spite of me,
Come rushing o'er my brain!

CHOIR.

Dies iræ, dies illa
Solvet sæclum in favilla! [*Organ plays.*

EVIL SPIRIT.

Horror lays hold on thee!
The judgment-trumpet sounds!
The graves rock to and fro!
And thy heart, from
Its ashy rest,
Incorporate anew
For fiery pangs,
Shudders into life!

MARGARET.

Would I were out of this!
I feel as though
The organ choked my breath,
As though the anthem drew
The life-blood from my heart!

CHOIR.

Judex ergo cum sedebit,
Quidquid latet adparebit,
Nil inultum remanebit.

MARGARET.

It feels so close!
The pillars of the wall
Press in upon me,
The arches of the roof
They weigh me down! — Air!

EVIL SPIRIT.

Hide thyself! Sin and shame
Will not be hidden. —
Air? Light?
Woe to thee!

CHOIR.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus ?
Quem patronum rogaturus ?
Cum vix justus sit securus ?

EVIL SPIRIT.

From thee the saints in bliss
Their faces turn away.
To reach their hands to thee
Makes the pure shudder! Woe!

CHOIR.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus ?

MARGARET.

Neighbour! Your smelling-bottle!

[*Swoons.*

SCENE V. — *Walpurgis Night.*

The Harz Mountains. District of Schirke and Elend.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Do you not wish you had a broomstick, friend?
Oh, for a he-goat, rough, and tough, and strong!
We're still a long way from our journey's end.

FAUST.

This knotted staff's enough for me, so long
As I feel fresh upon my legs. What boots
To cut our journey short, howe'er it lags?
To thread this maze of valleys all at rest,

And then to clamber up to yonder crags,
From which the fountain ever-babbling shoots,
'Tis this which gives our journey all its zest.
The birchen spray is kindling with the spring,
And even the dull pines feel its quickening;
Shall it not also make our limbs more brisk?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Of that I feel no trace, nor will.
My body is all winter-chill.
Would that our path lay over frost and snow!
How sadly the red moon's imperfect disk
Moves up the sky with her belated glow,
And gives so bad a light that we run bump
At every step against some rock or stump!
By your permission, I will hail
A Will-o'-Wisp. Out there I see
One burning merrily. So ho,
My friend! Will you before us sail?
Why will you waste your lustre so?
Pray be so kind as light us upward here.

WILL-O'-WISP.

Out of respect I'll struggle to repress,
And hope I may, my natural flightiness.
A zigzag course we're rather apt to steer.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ha, ha! He fain would imitate mankind.
Hold, in the devil's name, straight on, or, mind,
I'll blow your flickering light out!

WILL-O'-WISP.

'Twould appear
That you are master of the household here,

So I'll essay to do your bidding rightly.
But mind! the mountain's magic-mad to-day,
And if a Will-o'-Wisp's to light the way,
You must not deal with him too tightly.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, *and* WILL-O'-WISP.

(*In alternating song.*)

Now we're in the sphere, I deem,
Of enchantment and of dream.
Lead us on, thou meteor-gleam,
Lead us rightly, and apace,
To the deserts vast of space!
See, only see, tree after tree,
How thick and swift behind they drift,
And crag and clift make mop and mow.
And the long-snouted crags below,
Hark, how they snort, and how they blow!

Over moss and over stone,
Brook and brooklet race along.
What noise is that, around, above?
Hark, again! The sounds of song,
Lovers lamenting and making moan,
Loosing their laden hearts in sighs,
Voices we knew in the days that are flown,
When to live and to love were paradise?
All that we hope for, all that we love,
Throbs in the heart and thrills in the brain,
And fabling Echo, like the tale
Of olden times, o'er hill and dale
Reiterates the strain!

Tu-whit! Tu-whoo! More near, more near!
The jargon rises shrill and clear.
The owl, the pewit, and the jay,
All awake and abroad are they?

Be these salamanders there,
Long of leg and huge of paunch,
That go striding through the brakes?
Lo, the great roots, gaunt and bare,
How from rock and bank they branch!
Wreathed like intertangling snakes,
In coils fantastic, through the air
They stretch to scare and to ensnare us,
From wart-like knots, with life instinct,
Darting polyp-fibres, linked
To enmesh and overbear us!
And see! the mice of every hue,
How they hustle, and how they speed,
Through the moss and through the heather!
Up and down the fireflies, too,
Flit and flicker, thronged together,
To bewilder and mislead!

But what means this glamour? Say,
Which is moving, we or they?
All about us seems to spin,
Rocks and trees, that gape and grin,
And Will-o'-Wisps, that, low and high,
Flare, and flash, and multiply.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Grasp my skirt, and hold it tight,
Here's a central peak, where we
May with eyes of wonder see
The mountain all with Mammon bright.

FAUST.

Through chasm and cleft how strangely gleams
A dull red light as of the dawn!
Down to the very depths it streams,
Where gloomiest abysses yawn.

There clouds and exhalations rise,
Here from the mists light glimmers soft,
Now like fine threads it winds and plies,
Then like a fountain leaps aloft.
Here in a hundred veins it coils,
For many a rood, the valley through,
There, shut within yon gorge's toils,
In sparkles scatters out of view.
Near us, like sprinkled sand of gold,
Are flame-sparks strewn upon the air,
And now, through all its height, behold,
The wall of rocks is kindling there!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Doth not Sir Mammon rarely light
His halls up for our sports to-night?
Lucky you've seen it! I can hear,
Even now, his boisterous guests are near.

FAUST.

How through the air the storm-blast raves and hisses!
It smites my neck, shock after shock.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You'll have to clutch the old ribs of the rock,
Or it will hurl you down to yon abysses.
O'er the midnight a thick mist broods.
Hark to the crashing through the woods!
To and fro, the boughs between,
The affrighted owlets flit.
Hark, the columns, how they split,
Of the palaces evergreen!
Hear the branches straining, snapping,
The giant tree-stems' mighty moaning,
The huge roots yawning, creaking, groaning;

Each across the other clapping,
Down they crash, and thunder all,
In mad and intertangled fall:
And through the cliffs with ruin strewn
The wild winds whiz, and howl, and moan.
Voices o'er us dost thou hear?
Voices far, and voices near?
All the mountain-range along
Streams a raving witches' song.

WITCHES (*in chorus*).

The witches are for the Brocken bound,—
The stubble is yellow, the blade is green,—
There shall a mighty throng be found,
Sir Urian seated aloft between.
Right over stock and stone they go,
Beldame and buck-goat, hilloah, hilloah!

A VOICE.

Old Baubo comes alone; astride
A farrow-sow behold her ride!

CHORUS.

To whom is honour due be honour!
Dame Baubo, advance, and lead the way!
A sturdy sow, with a dame upon her,
Is guide full meet for our troop so gay.

A VOICE.

What road came you by?

A VOICE.

By Ilsenstein.
I peeped, as I passed on my midnight prowl,

Into the nest of the hornèd owl!
And didn't she open her eyes on mine?

A VOICE.

To hell with you, old wizen-face!
Why are you riding at such a pace?

A VOICE.

She grazed me as she passed. Just see,
The jade, how she has wounded me!

WITCHES' CHORUS.

The way is wide, the way is long.
Is this not a jolly bedlam throng?
The pitchfork pricks, and the broom it scratches,
The babe is stifled, the mother she hatches.

WIZARDS. HALF-CHORUS.

We crawl like snails; the womenkind
Have left us far and far behind;
For woman, when to hell she rides,
Outstrips us by a thousand strides.

OTHER HALF.

That's not at all the way we view it.
She takes a thousand strides to do it.
But, post howe'er she may, the man
Does it at once in a single span.

A VOICE (*above*).

From Felsensee, come away, come away!

VOICES (*from below*).

Up through the sky we fain would fly.
We've washed, and we're clean, as clean may be,
But barren for evermore are we.

BOTH CHORUSES.

The wind is down, and the stars are flown,
The wan moon hides her woe-worn face,
Along the dark shoot flame and spark,
To mark the wizards' roaring chase.

VOICE (*from below*).

Hold hard! Hold hard! Behind I'm left.

VOICE (*from above*).

Who is calling there from the rocky cleft?

A VOICE (*from below*).

Oh, take me with you! Three hundred year
Have I been climbing, climbing here,
But never can I the summit gain.
To be with my fellows I were fain.

BOTH CHORUSES.

Besom and broomstick, he-goat and prong,
All are good to whisk you along;
And surely the wight is in doleful plight,
Who cannot mount in the air to-night.

DEMI-WITCH (*from below*).

I've been tottering after this many a day,
And the rest are already so far away!
No peace have I at home, and here
I'm likely to light on no better cheer.

CHORUS OF WITCHES.

'Tis ointment puts heart in the witches' crew.
Any fluttering rag for a sail will do,
Any trough make a stout ship to scud through the sky,
Who flies not to-night, he will never fly.

BOTH CHORUSES.

And when you have got to the mountain's crest,
Drop to the ground, where it likes you best.
And cover the moorland all round about
With the weltering swarm of your wizard rout!

[*They descend.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Here's jamming, jolting, jabbering, justling,
Here's whizzing, whirling, bubbling, bustling!
Here's flashing, sparkling, stinking, burning,
All things topsy-turvy turning!
The real hurly-burly, which is
Very meat and drink to witches!
Stick close by me, or we shall be
Swept asunder presently.
Where art thou?

FAUST (*in the distance*).

Here!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ha! Steady, steady!
What! torn away so far already?
Then is it time I should make clear
My right as lord and master here.
Room for Sir Voland, room, I say!
My most sweet people, please make way!

Here, doctor, here, take hold of me,
And let us at a bound get free
Of this wild rabble, and its din there.
'Tis too mad even for such as I.
There's something shining there hard by,
With lustre quite peculiar. Look!
Yon bushes seem a quiet nook.
Come, come along! Let us slip in there.

FAUST.

Spirit of contradiction! Well, well, lead the way!
Yet 'tis a splendid notion, I must say;
To Brocken we on May-day night repair,
So keep aloof from all, when we get there.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What many-coloured flames! Just see,
There is a jovial company!
One's not alone, however few the folk.

FAUST.

Up yonder I would rather be.
Already flames and whirling smoke
I see ascending, and the throng
That to the Evil Spirit's lair
Tumultuously sweeps along!
There would I be, for surely there
Will many a riddle be untied.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And many a riddle be knotted, too.
Let the great world go brawling on! Aside
We'll tarry here in quiet out of view.
With men the custom is of ancient date,
To make themselves small worlds within the great.

Young witches yonder I espy,
As naked as their mothers bore 'em,
And old ones, too, that, wisely shy,
Have veiled their charms with true decorum.
For my sake, now, be civil to them all.
The pastime's great, the trouble small.
Hark! Instruments a-tuning! Curse
Upon their blowing and their scraping!
Come on, come on! There's no escaping
We must submit, or suffer worse.
I'll step before and introduce you; so
Will under further obligation lay you.
Look here, look here, my friend! How say you?
No squeezed-up shabby ballroom this, no, no!
Look onward there! You scarce can see the end.
A hundred fires are burning, row on row.
They dance, they chat, cook, drink, make love. In short,
Where, let me ask, will you find better sport?

FAUST.

Will you, in ushering us into their revel,
Present yourself as wizard, or as devil?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

My general rule's to play incognito.
On gala-days, however, one may show
One's orders. With no garter am I decked,
But here the horse hoof's held in high respect.
Dost see yon snail come crawling up? 'Tis clear,
Her tentacles already have found out
There's something more than common hereabout.
Even if I would forswear myself, I could not here.
But come along! From fire to fire we'll go:
I will the pander be, and you the beau.

[*To some, who are seated round expiring embers*

Old gentlemen, what is the reason, pray,
You sit so far from all the mirth away?
I'd think you showed more wisdom if I found you
Right in the thick of it in jovial mood,
With lots of brisk young wenches dancing round you.
At home one has enough of solitude.

GENERAL.

Who can trust a nation's truth,
  Though from ruin he may save her?
For, just as with the women, youth
  With them stands always first in favour.

MINISTER.

Folks now have all gone far astray.
  The good old times! that is my creed.
For when we'd things all our own way,
  That was the golden age indeed.

PARVENU.

No fools were we, yet, I allow,
  We often did the things we should not.
But all's turned topsy-turvy now,
  Just when we most desired it would not.

AUTHOR.

Who, as a rule, will now read aught
  That has the least pretence to thought?
And, as for the young people, they
  Grow sillier, perter, every day.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*who all at once appears very old*).

Mankind, I feel I may assume,
Are ripened for the day of doom,

Now that I here for the last time
The Mountain of the Witches climb:
My cask runs muddy, and one sees
The world is also on the lees.

A WITCH (*who traffics in old odds and ends*).

Come, gentle folks, don't pass me so!
Why throw a chance like this away?
Observe my wares; so choice a show
Is what you don't see every day.
Within my shop, sirs, there is nought —
A shop like it you'll nowhere find —
But has its proper mischief wrought
Unto the world and to mankind.
Here is no dagger but has run with gore;
No chalice, but from it has flowed
Hot shrivelling poison through each pore,
Which, till it came, with health had glowed:
No trinket, but to shame it has betrayed
Some woman born to be beloved; no blade,
But has been drawn for treasons fell and black,
Or stabbed a foe, perchance, behind his back.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Coz, coz, you're quite behind the age.
For what it wants you have no feeling.
Now novelties are all the rage;
In these, then, you should take to dealing!

FAUST.

Grant that I may not lose my wits! Was e'er
In all the universe so strange a Fair!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

To reach the top the whole mad throng are striving.
'Tis you are driven, and yet you think you're driving.

FAUST.

Who, who is that?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Observe her well.

'Tis Lilith.

FAUST.

Who?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Adam's first wife. Beware
Of her and of her beauteous hair!
Wherein she doth all women else excel.
A young man once let her with that ensnare,
It is a mesh he'll find it hard to tear.

FAUST.

Yonder sit two, an old witch and a young;
But now they danced like mad, and wheeled, and flung.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No rest from that to-night! They start anew.
Come, take a partner! We must foot it, too.

FAUST (*dancing with a young witch*).

I dreamed a dream, was sweet to see;
In it I saw an apple-tree,
And on it shone fair apples two,
I climbed to pluck them where they grew.

THE FAIR ONE.

From Eden downward, you've in sooth
For pippins had a lickerish tooth.
It glads my very heart to know
That such within my garden grow.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*with the old one*).

I dreamed a dream, was wild to see;
In it I saw a cloven tree.
It had a . . .
. . . as it was, I fancied it.

THE OLD ONE.

With deepest reverence I salute
The cavalier of the horse's foot.
If at a . . . he does not scare,
Let him . . . straight prepare.

PROKTOPHANTASMIST.

Confound your impudence! Have we to you
Not proved long since, by reasons most complete,
That spirits never stand on ordinary feet?
Yet here you dance, as common mortals do.

THE FAIR ONE (*dancing*).

What brings him to our ball, now?

FAUST (*dancing*).

Oh!

He's everywhere, and always so.
What others dance he must apprise.
Each step he cannot criticise
In his conceit's no step at all.
The thing that most excites his gall
Is onward motion. If you would
In circles keep revolving still,
As he does in his ancient mill,
No doubt he'd say, all right and good!
And that especially, provided
You owned you were by his opinion guided.

PROKTOPHANTASMIST.

Still at it! 'Tis past bearing! Vanish hence!
What! in these days of high intelligence!
This devilish crew despise all rule. We boast
Our great good sense, yet Tegel has its ghost.
The years, Heaven knows how many, I have been
Sweeping out such delusions piece by piece!
But never will the human mind be clean.
'Tis labour lost — such follies never cease.

THE FAIR ONE.

Then cease to bore us here. Give place!

PROKTOPHANTASMIST.

I tell you, spirits, to your face,
I'll not endure this spirit-thrall!
My spirit cannot manage it at all.
[*The dancing proceeds.*
No one to-night, I see, my word regards.
My journey for my pains have I;
And still I hope, before I die,
To put a curb on devils and on bards.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Straight in a puddle he will squat;
He always soothes himself with that.
And when the leeches have grown plump
Upon the juices of his rump,
He's cured, and without more ado,
Of spirits, and of spirit, too.
[*To* FAUST, *who has left the dance.*
Why have you left the pretty wench that sang
So sweetly to you in the dance?

FAUST.

Ugh! from her mouth a red mouse sprang,
Even while she sang.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A lucky chance!
About such things we're not too nice.
It was not gray, let that suffice.
Who cares for trifles such as this
When on the very brink of bliss?

FAUST.

Then I saw —

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What?

FAUST.

Mephisto, seest thou there,
Far off, alone, a girl, pale, pale and sweet?
She drags herself along, and with the air
Of one that makes her way with shackled feet.
It cannot, cannot be; and yet
She minds me of sweet Margaret.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Don't look that way! It can do nought but scaith.
'Tis but a magic shape, a lifeless wraith.
It is not well to meet such anywhere.
It curdles up man's blood by its cold stare,
And by it he is turned to stone well-nigh.
Thou'st heard, of course, of the Medusa.

FAUST.

Ay.
The eyes of one that's dead, in sooth are those,
Which there has been no loving hand to close.
That is the breast Margaret gave up to me,
Those the sweet limbs whose touch was ecstasy.

OBERON.

Learn ye, whom the marriage-bond
Has not made one-hearted,
If you'd make a couple fond,
Only have them parted.

TITANIA.

Is he all snarl, and she all whim,
Upon them seize instanter,
Away to the South Pole with him,
And at the North Pole plant her!

ORCHESTRA (*tutti fortissimo*).

Fly's proboscis, midge's nose,
And what to these akin are,
Frog and shrilling cricket, those
Purveyors of our din are.

SOLO.

See where, a soap-bubble sack,
The bagpipe it is coming!
Hark the Schnecke-Schnicke-Schnack
Through its snub-nose humming!

SPIRIT (*that is fashioning itself*).

Paunch of toad and spider's foot,
With little wings below 'em,
Make not, 'tis true, a little brute,
But make a little poem.

A PAIR OF LOVERS.

Tiny step and lofty leap
Through honeydew and vapours;
Yet up in air you do not sweep,
Despite of all your capers.

INQUISITIVE TRAVELLER.

Is this Glamour, to fade anon?
Shall I believe my sight, to
See the fair god Oberon
Here with us to-night, too?

ORTHODOX.

No claws! No tail! And yet, I wis,
Undoubtedly the fact is,
That, like the gods of Greece, he is
A devil in his practice.

NORTHERN ARTIST.

My things at present, to be sure,
Are sketchy and unsteady,
Still I for the Italian tour
Betimes am getting ready.

PURIST.

'Tis ill luck brings me here; this crew,
Their din grows loud and louder,
And of the whole witch-medley two,
And only two, wear powder.

YOUNG WITCH.

Powder is, like petticoat,
For beldames old and ugly,
So I sit naked on my goat,
And show my body smugly.

MATRON.

With you we're too well-bred by far
To squabble on the spot, Miss;
But, young and tender as you are,
I hope that you may rot, Miss.

LEADER OF THE BAND.

Fly's proboscis, midge's nose,
These nude folk buzz not round so,
Frog and shrilling cricket, close
In, keep time, and sound so!

WEATHERCOCK (*toward one side*).

More brilliant throng could heart desire?
All brides, young, fresh, and active!
And younkers, full of blood and fire,
A medley most attractive.

WEATHERCOCK (*toward the other side*).

Well, if the ground here shall not gape,
These all to swallow plump down,
Right off, their antics to escape,
I'll into hell-pit jump down.

XENIEN.

See us here as insects! Ha!
With nebs small, sharp, and slitting,
To render Satan, our papa,
High homage, as befitting.

HENNINGS.

See how they crowd, and cheer the fun
Of every kind that's started!
They'll even say, ere all is done,
That they are kindly-hearted!

MUSCYET.

Itself among this witches' rout
My fancy gladly loses;
For I could manage them, no doubt,
More readily than the Muses.

CI-DEVANT GENIUS OF THE TIME.

Cling to my skirts! Whate'er betide,
Our worth will somewhere class us;
The Blocksberg's summit's broad and wide,
Like Germany's Parnassus.

INQUISITIVE TRAVELLER.

Who is yon stiff starched fellow, say,
With stride so pompous walking?
He sniffs and sniffs where'er he may,
"'Tis Jesuits, he is stalking!"

CRANE.

In troubled streams, as well as clear,
'Tis my delight to angle;
So you see pious people here
With devils mingle-mangle.

WORLDLING.

Yes, nothing can the pious daunt,
This place as good as any;
Upon the Blocksberg here they plant
Conventicles a-many.

DANCER.

Hark, far-off drums! Sure, some new throng
Is in the distance looming!
Oh, never mind! It is among
The reeds the bitterns booming!

DANCING MASTER.

Oh, how they fling, and jig, and flop,
Each capering as he best can.
The crooked skip, the clumsy hop,
To foot it, as the rest can.

FIDDLER.

Though mingling thus, this rabble crew
For hate would like to rend them;
As Orpheus' lyre together drew
The beasts, the bagpipes blend them.

DOGMATIST.

Critic or skeptic shall not throw
A doubt on my ideals;
The devil must be something, though,
Or how could devils be else?

IDEALIST.

The fancy, that doth work in me,
For once much too intense is;
In sooth, if I be all I see,
To-night I've lost my senses.

REALIST.

Oh, entities a world of strife
And torment do entail me;
Here for the first time in my life
I find my footing fail me.

SUPERNATURALIST.

I'm quite enchanted with this scene,
Its babble and confusions,
For as to angels I can e'en
From devils draw conclusions.

SKEPTIC.

Upon the flamelet's track they roam,
And think the treasure near is;
Here I am perfectly at home,
For doubt the devil's fere is.

LEADER OF THE BAND.

Frog and shrilling cricket, those
  Confounded dilettanti!
Fly's proboscis, midge's nose,
  You're fine musicanti!

THE KNOWING ONES.

Sans souci, they call us so,
  Us jolly dogs, that troll out;
To walk on foot is now no go,
  So on our heads we stroll out.

THE MALADROIT ONES.

Ah! many rare good things, 'tis true,
  We had of yore a hand in;
But, oh! our pumps are danced quite through,
  And we're on bare soles standing!

WILL-O-THE-WISPS.

We come fresh from our native haunts,
  From bogs and from morasses,
But who, of all these gay gallants,
  In glitter can surpass us?

STARFLAKE.

I shot down hither from on high,
  A star-fire sheen all o'er me;
Now prostrate on the ground I lie,
  Who'll to my legs restore me?

THE MASSIVE ONES.

Room! Room! A lane there! Clear the way!
  The grass snaps, where we jump once:
Lo! spirits come; but spirits they
  With bodies, ay, and plump ones!

PUCK.

Tread not, I beg, so heavily,
Like young calves elephantine;
And let stout Puck the plumpest be
To-night our fairy haunt in!

ARIEL.

If you have wings, boon Nature's gift,
Then, ere our revel closes,
Away with me by grove and clift
Up to yon hill of roses!

ORCHESTRA (*pianissimo*).

On trailing cloud, and wreathèd mist,
A sudden light has kindled;
Trees, sedges whist, a breeze has kissed,
And all to air have dwindled!

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *A Gloomy Day. Open Country.*

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES.

FAUST.

In misery! In despair! After long wandering wretched to and fro, to be now in prison! She, that gentle ill-starred being, immured as a malefactor in a dungeon, to wait a frightful doom! And it has come to this! to this! Treacherous, worthless Spirit, and thou hast kept this from me! — Ay, stand there, stand! Roll thy fiendish eyes in savage wrath! Stand and defy me by thy intolerable presence! A prisoner! in irremediable misery! Given over to wicked spirits,

and to the merciless judgment of men! And me, me wert thou all the while lulling into forgetfulness, with vapid dissipations hiding her hourly increasing wretchedness from me, and leaving her to perish without help.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

She is not the first.

FAUST.

Hound! Detestable monster! Change him, thou infinite Spirit, change the reptile once more into that semblance of a dog, in which he often delighted to gambol before me at night, to double himself up at the feet of the harmless wayfarer, and, if he fell, to fasten his fangs upon his shoulders. Change him again into his favourite shape, that he may crawl on his belly in the dust before me, that I may spurn him with my feet, accursèd as he is! — Not the first! — Woe! Woe! Not by the soul of man is it to be comprehended, how more than one human creature has sunk to such a depth of misery, — how the first did not in its writhing death-agony make satisfaction for all the rest before the eyes of Him that evermore forgives! The misery of this single soul pierces my very marrow, eats into my life; thou grinnest complacently at the fate of thousands!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Now we are once more at our wit's end, strung to that pitch at which the reason of you mortals snaps. Why do you make fellowship with us, if you cannot be one of us out and out? Will you fly, yet are not proof against dizziness? Did we force ourselves on you, or you on us?

FAUST.

Gnash not thy ravening teeth against me thus! I'm sick of it! — Great and sublime Spirit, thou who didst

deign to reveal thyself to me, thou who knowest my heart and my soul, why link me to this infamous yoke-fellow, who feeds on mischief, and battens on destruction?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Hast done?

FAUST.

Save her! or woe to thee! The awfullest of curses smite thee for myriads of years!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I cannot loose the bonds of the avenger, nor undo his bolts. — Save her! — Who caused her ruin? I or thou? [FAUST *looks wildly round.*] Wouldst grasp the thunder? 'Tis well it was not given to you miserable mortals. To crush the first innocent man he comes across, that is just the tyrant's way of making a clearance for himself out of a difficulty.

FAUST.

Take me where she is! She shall be free!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And the danger which you run? Remember the guilt of blood, shed by your hand, still lies upon the town. Avenging spirits hover over the spot where the victim fell, and lie in wait for the returning murderer!

FAUST.

This too from thee? A world's murder and death upon thee, monster! Conduct me thither, I say, and set her free!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I will conduct thee! Hear what I can do! Have I all power in heaven and on earth? I will cast a glamour over the gaoler's senses; do you possess yourself of his keys, and bear her off with mortal hands. I shall watch outside. My magic horses shall be ready to carry you away. This much I can do.

FAUST.

Up and away!

SCENE II. — *Night. Open Country.*

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, *sweeping along on black horses.*

FAUST.

What weave they yonder round the Ravenstone?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Can't tell what mess they have in hand.

FAUST.

They wave up, they wave down, they are swaying and stooping.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A Witches' Guild.

FAUST.

They strew and make libation.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Push on! Push on!

SCENE III. — *A Dungeon.*

FAUST *with a bundle of keys, before a small iron door.*

FAUST.

I quake with a strange dread. The woe of all
Mankind possesses me. This is her cell!
Here does she lie behind this cold dank wall,
And all her crime was having loved too well.
Why do I hang back thus? Is't fear
To think how I again shall see her?
Onward! Each moment's pause brings nearer her death-knell.

[*Opening the lock. A voice is heard within singing.*

My mother, the wanton,
She took my life.
My father, the rogue,
Ate me up with his knife!
My wee little sister,
She picked up my bones,
And laid them to cool
All under the stones.
Then I turned to a woodbird,
So bonnie to see!
Fly away, fly away
To the woodland with me!

FAUST (*opens the door*).

She little dreams that her beloved is near,
The rattling chains, the rustling straw can hear.

[*He enters.*

MARGARET (*hiding her face on her pallet*).

They come! Oh, bitter death! Oh, woe is me!

FAUST (*softly*).

Hush! hush! I come to set thee free!

MARGARET (*throwing herself at his feet*)

If thou be'st human, feel for my distress!

FAUST.

Thou'lt wake the sentinels! These cries repress.
[*Takes hold of her fetters to unlock them.*

MARGARET (*on her knees*).

Who, hangman, who has given you right
To treat me thus — or who could give?
You fetch me, while 'tis yet midnight.
Oh, pity me, and let me live!
Is daybreak to-morrow not soon enough? [*Rises.*
Oh, I am still so young, so young,
And yet must die!
Fair, too, they told me, once was I,
And that was my undoing. He was nigh,
My own dear love, in those sweet hours.
But now he's far away from me.
My wreath is torn, and scattered are its flowers.
Seize me not with a grasp so rough!
Spare me, what have I ever done to thee?
Oh, let me not in vain implore!
I never saw thee all my days before.

FAUST.

Can I survive this miserable hour?

MARGARET.

Now I am wholly in your power,
To do with me whatever you think best

But to the babe first let me give the breast!
All through the night I coaxed and stilled it:
They took it from me to vex my brain,
And now they say, I would have killed it,
And never shall I be blithe again.
The people, they sing songs about me,
To sting me, and flout me.
Ah! they mean me unkindly by it;
An old tale ends so. Who bade them apply it?

FAUST (*flings himself on the ground*).

Thy lover here lies prostrate at thy feet,
To rend these miserable bonds, my sweet!

MARGARET (*throws herself by his side*).

Oh, let us kneel to call upon the saints!
Look! Look! Under the stair!
Under the door there,
The fires of hell,
They seethe, and they roar there!
The fiend within,
Furious and fell,
Is making a din!

FAUST.

Margaret! Margaret!

MARGARET (*listening*).

That was my loved one's voice!
[*She springs up — her fetters fall off*
Where is he? Where? I heard him call.
I'm free! I'm free! Let no one try
To stay me! On his neck I'll fall,
Upon his bosom lie!
He called on Margaret! stood there at the door
Through all hell's howling and its roar,

Through devilish scoff, and gibe, and groan,
I recognised the sweet, the loving tone!

FAUST.

'Tis I!

MARGARET.

Thou, thou! Oh, say it once again!
[*Clasping him.*
'Tis he, 'tis he! Where now are all my pains?
The anguish of the dungeon? Of the chains?
'Tis thou! Thou com'st to rescue me! Oh, then,
Then I am saved. Oh, now again
Along the street I wander free,
Where first I met with thee;
Am in the cheerful garden, by the gate,
Where for thee I and Martha wait.

FAUST (*trying to force her away*).

Come with me! Come!

MARGARET.

Oh, stay!
I like so much to stay, love, where thou stay'st.

FAUST.

Quick, quick, away!
Oh, if thou wilt not haste,
We shall rue dearly the delay!

MARGARET.

How's this?
Thou canst no longer kiss?
Parted from me so short a time, and yet
Thou couldst the way to kiss forget?

Why do I grow so sad upon thy bosom now,
When from thy words, thy looks, in other days
A whole heaven flooded me, and thou
Didst kiss, as thou wouldst stifle me, always?
Kiss me, or I'll kiss thee! [*Embraces him.*
Oh, woe is me!
Thy lips are cold, they chill me through.
How! not one word! Where hast thou left
Thy love? Oh, who
Has thy poor Margaret of that bereft?
[*Turns away from him.*

FAUST.

Come, follow me! Take courage, oh, my sweet!
I'll clasp thee to my heart, when this is o'er,
A thousand times more fondly than before,
So thou'lt but follow me. Hence, I entreat!

MARGARET (*turning to him*).

And is it thou, then, thou? And is this true?

FAUST.

Oh, yes! Come! Come!

MARGARET.

My chains thou wilt undo,
Take me again into thy breast! — So, so!
How comes it that thou shrinkest not from me?
Oh, my sweet love, dost thou, then, know
Whom thou art setting free?

FAUST.

Come! Come! The night's already on the wane!

MARGARET.

My mother I have slain,
And drowned my child! To thee
The little one was given, and me;
To thee, love, too! 'Tis thou! Oh, can it be?
Give me thy hand! Yes! Yes! these are no dreams, —
Thine own dear hand. But, woe is me! 'tis wet!
How! dripping, dripping yet?
How it doth run!
Oh, wipe it off! Meseems,
There's blood upon't! Ah, God! what hast thou done?
Put up thy sword! Oh, sheathe it, I implore!

FAUST.

Let what is past be past! I can no more.
Each word thou speak'st is death to me.

MARGARET.

No, I must go, but thou must stay.
I will describe the graves to thee:
To-morrow thou to them must see
By break of day.
For mother the best place provide.
Then to her lay my brother nearest;
Me a little to one side,
But not too far off, dearest!
And the little one on my breast to the right!
No one else shall lie by me.
Ah, love, to nestle up to thee,
It was a sweet, a dear delight!
But that I never again shall know.
I have a feeling as if I must
Hang, cling to thee, and thou didst thrust
Me back — back — back! Yet, wherefore so?
Thou art, thou lookest, so good, so kind!

FAUST.

If such thou feel'st I am, come, come, love!

MARGARET.

Where?

Out yonder?

FAUST.

Out to the open air!

MARGARET.

If the grave is there,
If death is waiting, come! 'Tis best.
From here into the bed of everlasting rest,
And not a step beyond! Ah, me!
Thou'rt going? Henry, if I might with thee!

FAUST.

Thou canst! Decide! See, open stands the door!

MARGARET.

I dare not go. For me all hope is o'er.
What boots to fly? Beset with spies am I.
It is so hard to have to beg your way,
And with an evil conscience harder still;
It is so hard in a strange land to stray,
And they will catch me, do whate'er I will.

FAUST.

Then I remain with thee!

MARGARET.

Fly, fly!
Thy child will die!
Save it! oh, save it!
Away! away!

Keep to the path,
Up by the brook,
And into the wood beyond!
Strike to the left
By the plank in the pond!
Quick! Seize it, seize it!
It tries to rise!
It is struggling yet.
Help! Help!

FAUST.

Be calm! be still!
Only one step, and thou art free

MARGARET.

Oh, were we only past the hill!
There sits my mother upon a stone;
My temples throb with an icy dread.
There sits my mother upon a stone,
And to and fro she waves her head:
Her eyes are set, she makes no moan,
Her hand is heavy as lead.
She slept so long, no more she'll wake;
She slept, that we our delight might take
That was a happy time!

FAUST.

Thou'rt deaf to all remonstrance, prayer,
And I perforce must bear thee hence.

MARGARET.

Unhand me! Cruel one, forbear!
I will endure no violence.
Lay not this murderous grasp on me.
Time was, I gave up all to pleasure thee!

FAUST.

The day is breaking! Darling! Darling!

MARGARET.

Ay!
The day, indeed! The last day draweth nigh.
It should have been my wedding-day. Let no one know
That thou hast been with Margaret before.
Woe to my garland, woe!
Already all is o'er.
Love, we shall meet once more
But not in the dance, ah, no!
The multitude, they come!
So hushed, you cannot hear the hum.
The lanes, the streets, the square,
Scarce hold the thousands there.
The bell! Hark to its boom!
The staff of doom
Is broken. How they bind me, blind me!
Now to the seat of blood they drag me off;
And every neck doth feel
The quiver of the steel,
That's quivering for mine!
Now lies the world all silent as the grave.

FAUST.

Oh, that I never had been born!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*appears at the door*).

Away!
Away! Or you are lost for ever!
Truce to this waiting and prating, this bootless delay!
My horses shiver!
The morning is dawning gray!

MARGARET.

What's that, sprang from the ground? I know its face!
Send him away! 'tis he! 'tis he!
What should he do in a holy place?
He comes for me.

FAUST.

Thou shalt — must live!

MARGARET.

Judgment of God!
Myself unto Thy mercy I resign!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Come! Come! How's this? You will not stir?
I'll leave you in the lurch with her.

MARGARET.

Thine am I, Father, thine!
Save me! Ye angels! Ministers of light
Compass me round with your protecting might!
Henry, I shudder as I think of thee.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

She's judged.

VOICE (*from above*).

She's saved.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

Away with me!

[*Disappears with* FAUST.

VOICE (*from within, dying away*).

Henry! Henry!

Faust

A Tragedy

Part II.

Faust: A Tragedy

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *A Beautiful Landscape.*

FAUST *reclining in a flowery meadow, wearied, restless, trying to sleep.*

TWILIGHT.

(*A troop of elves flitting round him, graceful little forms.*)

ARIEL.

(*Song, accompanied by Eolian harps.*)

WHEN the spring-time, scattering flowers,
Robes in verdure hill and glen,
When green meadows, bright with showers,
Gladden all the sons of men,
Little elves, where spirits languish,
Haste their troubled fears to still;
They are grieved by mortal's anguish,
Be the mourner good or ill.

Ye, who in airy circles round him float,
Here show that ye are elves of noble note.
Soothe into calm his heart's distressful fray,
Pluck out the burning arrows of remorse,
Wash from his spirit all its past dismay;

Night hath four periods in her solemn course,
Now fill them kindly up without delay!
Pillow his head on yon cool bank, and then
Bathe him in dew from Lethe's stream; anon
Will his cramp-stiffened limbs relax again,
When all refreshed he wakens with the dawn.
Do the elves' fairest 'best aright,
Restore him to the blessèd light!

CHORUS.

When across the emerald meadows
Warm and fragrant breezes play,
Closing round in misty shadows,
Softly falls the twilight gray;
Whispers gently peace to mortals,
Rocks the heart to childlike rest;
Closes up the daylight's portals
To those wearied eyes unblest.

Now the night is deeply darkling,
Gleams out hallowed star on star,
Lights of power, or faintly sparkling,
Twinkle near, and gleam afar.
In the lake they sparkle tender,
Gleam in yon clear vault profound;
Reigns the moon in full-orbed splendour,
Perfecting the peace around.

See, the hours of night have vanished,
Joy and grief have passed away.
Wake! rejoice! thy pain is banished,
Trust the new-advancing day.
Vales grow green, hills steep and steeper,
Shadows deepen thick with leaves,
And the harvest to the reaper
In long silvery billows heaves.

Fix thy gaze in yonder glory,
  Wouldst thou win thy wish and keep.
Frail the spell that resteth o'er thee,
  Fling away the husk of sleep!
Though the crowd grow pale and waver,
  Onward thou, with dauntless soul!
Gallant heart is baffled never,
  Striving to a noble goal!

[*A tremendous clangour indicates the approach of the Sun.*

ARIEL.

Hark, the ringing hours of morn!
Pealing unto spirit ears,
Lo, another day is born,
Lo, another dawn appears!
Adamantine gates are crashing,
Phœbus' car-wheels rattling, clashing,—
What clang harbingers the sun!
Trump and clarion pealing clear,
Dazzling eye and stunning ear!
Hence! Our elfin reign is done.
Slip into your flowery cells,
Couch in lone, untrodden dells,
To the clefts and thickets come!
Day will all your powers benumb.

FAUST (*awaking*).

Life's pulses dance with fresh and bounding pace,
The ethereal splendours of the dawn to greet;
Thou, earth, thou too this night didst hold thy place,
And breathest with new vigour at my feet,
Bid'st joy even now within my breast grow rife,
And high resolves dost stir with kindling heat,
To scale life's topmost heights through toil and strife!
Now lies the world in morning's twilight beam,

The woodland rings with thousand-voicèd life,
All through the valley misty hazes stream,
Yet to its depths doth heaven's clear radiance creep,
And, bathed in freshness, wood and thicket gleam,
From dewy clefts where late they lay asleep;
The glades are dappled with a thousand dyes,
Where flower and leaflet trembling pearls do weep,
And all around grows fair as Paradise!

Aloft the giant peaks, far-gleaming bright,
Proclaim the hour at hand, that fires the skies;
They feel the first flush of the eternal light,
That finds its way betimes to us below.
Now o'er the green slopes of yon Alpine height
The advancing splendour spreads a livelier glow,
And, step by step, it gains the lower ground.
Lo, the broad sun! And blinded with the flow,
That stings the shrinking sight, I turn me round.

So when a hope, by long devotion fanned,
Hath won the height of its desire and found
Fulfilment's portals wing-like wide expand,
But now from yonder depths eternal leaps
A whelming burst of flame, amazed we stand;
Life's torch we'd fain illumine there, when sweeps
A sea of fire around us, eddying fast —
Is't love? is't hate? that round us hotly creeps,
With joy and pain, in alternation vast, —
So that once more to earth we turn our gaze,
And shrinking childhood's mantle round us cast.

So then behind me let the sunbeams blaze!
The waterfall, that down yon chasm is roaring,
I view with deepening rapture and amaze.
Now, in a myriad broken runlets pouring,
It bounds from ledge to ledge, and, shattering there,
Shoots up, in spray and filmy vapour soaring.

Yet o'er this turmoil how divinely fair
The rainbow's many-tinted arch is wound,
Now pencilled clear, now melting into air,
A dewy cool diffusing far around,
A mirror this of mortal coil and strife!
And there, if well thou ponderest, will be found,
In glowing hues revealed, a type of life.

SCENE II. — *Imperial Palace. Throne-room.*

PRIVY COUNCIL MET IN EXPECTATION OF THE EMPEROR.

TRUMPETS.

Enter courtiers of every rank in magnificent dresses. The EMPEROR *ascends the throne. On his right hand The* ASTROLOGER.

THE EMPEROR.

I greet the liegemen true and dear,
Met here from near and distant lands;
My sage, I see, beside me stands,
But why my fool, is he not here?

PAGE.

Sir, on your royal train he stumbled
As we came up the stair, and tumbled;
They bore Sir Corpulence away, —
Or dead or drunk, who is to say?

SECOND PAGE.

And what was passing strange, apace
Another steps into his place;
The dress he wore is rich and rare,
But so grotesque, it makes folks stare.

The guards their halberds crossed before
The fellow as he reached the door,
As coming contrary to rule;
But see! he's here, the forward fool!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*kneeling before the throne*).

What is accursed, yet welcome ever;
What is desired, yet kept at bay;
What do men turn their backs on never,
Yet's banned and railed at day by day;
Whom dost thou dare not summon here,
Whose name in all men's ears is sweet,
Who to the very throne draws near,
Yet is self-banished to retreat?

EMPEROR.

Friend, for the nonce your jargon spare!
Here riddles out of place are sadly;
They are these gentlemen's affair.
Resolve them, and I'll listen gladly.
My former fool, I fear, has lost his head:
You take his place, and come up here instead.
[MEPHISTOPHELES *goes up and places himself on the* EMPEROR'S *left.*

MURMUR OF THE CROWD.

A new fool — so new plagues begin.
Where comes he from? — how came he in?
The old one tripped — used up, past saving:
He was a vat — here now's a shaving.

EMPEROR.

So now, my liegemen, whom I love,
Be welcome all, from far and near!

Beneath auspicious stars ye're gathered here;
For us are joy and weal writ there above!
But say, why, at a time when we
From every care would fain be free
In mumming, mask, and revelry
To take our fill of pure delights,
Should we be plagued with setting state affairs to rights?
But since you're clear they will not brook delay,
Then be it so, and have it your own way.

CHANCELLOR.

Virtue supreme, that, like an aureole bright,
Circles the Emperor's brows, his royal hand
Alone can exercise by sovereign right.
Justice! What all men love, what all demand,
All long for, and without it scarce may live, —
This to his people 'tis his part to give.
But what avails clear head, or kindly heart,
Or ready hand to play the patriot's part,
When the state's torn by feverish disquiet,
And mischief runs in breeding mischief riot?
The whole broad realm below to us doth seem
From our high vantage ground a nightmare dream,
Where forms misshapen are in chaos blent,
Where lawlessness makes law its instrument,
And error and delusion everywhere
Are rampant, and infect the very air.
One steals a flock, a woman one,
Cross, chalice, candles from the altar,
Brags through the years of what he's done,
Nor gets his neck into a halter.
Now to the court the accusers throng,
The judge in cushioned state sits proud,
In surging eddies rolls along
Tumultuously the clamorous crowd.

Yet dreads the criminal no ill
Who in accomplices has friends,
And "Guilty!" is the sentence still
Where innocence on itself depends.
So will the world in time be wrecked,
Truth, honour, virtue perish quite;
How should we there the sense expect,
Alone can guide us to what's right?
A man, not ill-disposed, in time
To flattery or to bribes will fall,
A judge, who cannot punish crime,
Go partner with the criminal.
My sketch I've drawn of blackest hue,
Yet fain had kept it from the view. [*Pause*
Steps must be taken, and ere long;
When all or do or suffer wrong,
There's danger even to the throne.

FIELD-MARSHAL.

Oh, the mad days wherein we're living!
All men are taking blows or giving,—
Obedience is a thing unknown.
The cit behind his moated wall,
The noble in his rocky nest,
Combine at bay to keep us all,
Each holding stoutly by the rest.
Our mercenaries restive grow,
Demand their hire with angry cry,
Yet, if 'twere all paid up, we know
They'd bolt, and never say "Good-bye!"
To say what all men want's debarred,
Is to disturb a hornet's nest;
The kingdom they should shield and guard
Is ravaged, plundered, and oppressed.
None try to curb the rabble rout;
Already half the world's undone;

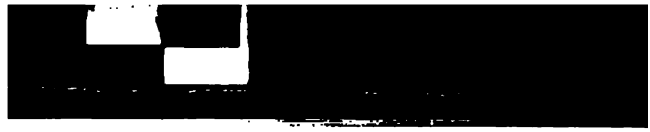
Kings still there be, a few, about,
But not one thinks 'tis his affair, not one.

TREASURER.

Who'd pin his faith upon allies ?
Our funds, they say, they'll subsidise,
But at the source their bounties stop,
And leak through to us drop by drop.
Again, sir, who, your wide realms through,
Keeps what his fathers left him, who ?
Where'er we turn, some new man's in the ascendent,
And will, forsooth, be independent.
Do what he may, howe'er absurd
Or wrong, we must not say a word.
We have surrendered rights so many,
We have not left ourselves with any.
On so-called parties in the state
There's no dependence nowadays;
Whether they rail at us, or praise,
We prize alike their love and hate.
Your Ghibelline, so too your Guelph,
Greedy of ease, gets out of reach.
What man now helps his neighbour ? Each
Is only thinking of himself.
The golden gates are barred; men screw,
And scrape, and snatch, and hoard, and pile,
And our exchequer's empty all the while.

STEWARD.

What plagues beset my office too!
We're trying day by day to save,
Yet each day brings me calls for more,
And cares and worries new and grave.
The kitchen never lacks good store:
Stags, wild boars, leverets, hinds, and hares,
Fowls, turkeys, geese and ducks in pairs,—



Payment in kind, — whate'er may hap,
Come duly in, to fill the gap.
But now our wine is running low.
Butts upon butts we once did own,
All the best growths, the finest years,
Piled in the cellar, tiers on tiers;
But our great nobles round the throne,
Slaking a thirst that knows no stop,
Are draining them to the last drop.
Even the Town Council are not able
To keep their stores untapped; they fly
To bowl and beaker, drain them dry,
Till the sots sink beneath the table.
Now I, perforce, must pay for all:
The Jew won't spare me: he presents
His bonds of credit, that forestall
The produce of the next year's rents.
Our very pigs we cannot fatten,
The pillow's pawned from off the bed,
And what to table comes is forehand-eaten bread.

EMPEROR (*reflects awhile, then says to* MEPHISTOPHELES).

Have you no grievance, fool, to bring us pat in?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Not I, indeed. Viewing this grand display, —
Thee and thy Court, — full trust who must not feel,
Where kingship holds indisputable sway,
And, backed by ready force, makes foemen reel?
Where loyal hearts, strong through conviction clear,
And energy to act, are ever near,
Who could for wrong or purpose dark unite,
Where stars are shining so supremely bright?

MURMUR.

He is a knave — a shrewd one too.
He lies — but with an end in view.
I'm sure there's something lurks behind —
Some what? — Some scheme to cheat the blind!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Where lacks not something in this earthly sphere?
Here this, there that: 'tis Coin is lacking here.
Not from the floor can it be scraped, no doubt;
Still wisdom draws what's hid most deeply out.
In mountain-lodes, in walls far under ground,
Gold, coined and uncoined too, is to be found.
And ask you, who can bring it to the light?
Some gifted man's Nature-and-Spirit-might.

CHANCELLOR.

Nature and Spirit? No words for Christian men!
For this they burn your atheists now and then,
As such talk is extremely dangerous.
Nature is Sin, Spirit the devil; thus
They gender doubt betwixt them — that
Deformed hermaphroditic brat.
This sort of thing won't do with us!
Our Emperor's ancient kingdom through,
Two orders have sprung up, and only two, —
The Clergy and the Nobles, — and they make
A sure stay for his throne, and seemly guard,
Defying every tempest; so they take
The Church and State for their well-earned reward.
There's a rebellious spirit brewing
Amongst the vulgar and the bad;
All heretics' and wizards' doing,
Who're driving town and country mad.
And now with ribald jests you, you, begin
To assail the men who move in this high sphere!

Hearts rotten at the core to you are dear,
For they to fools are very nigh akin!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I see the scholar, sir, in what you say.
What you touch not, for you lies miles away;
What you grasp not, no being has for you;
What you count not, you're clear cannot be true;
What you weigh not, has neither weight nor size;
What you coin not, is worthless in your eyes.

EMPEROR.

Our needs are nowise to be lightened thus.
Your Lenten Sermon, what is that to us?
I'm sick of the eternal How and When:
'Tis cash we want — hard cash! So get it, then!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

All you desire I'll get, and more, so please ye;
The task is light, and yet, though light, not easy.
The gold is there; but how to haul it in?
That calls for skill: who knows how to begin?
Only reflect, in the dark days, when tides
Of men swamped countries and their folk besides,
How he and he, in the first panic scare,
Hid what he prized most dearly anywhere!
So was it under Rome's imperial sway —
So on to yesterday, ay, to to-day.
It all lies hidden in the soil; the soil
The Emperor's is, and he shall have the spoil.

TREASURER.

Well, for a fool, he does not talk amiss;
The Emperor's ancient right undoubted this!

CHANCELLOR.

For you spreads Satan golden snares; you'll do
What is unrighteous and unholy too.

STEWARD.

So that he only bring us gifts of price,
About unrighteousness I sha'n't be nice.

FIELD MARSHAL.

Shrewd fool, to promise what by all is sought!
The soldier won't inquire whence it was brought.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And if, belike, you think I'm talking fudge,
There's the Astrologer — let him be judge!
Cycle on Cycle, Hour and House he knows;
Say, sir, what do the heavenly signs disclose?

MURMUR.

A pair of knaves — confederates clear,
Phantast and fool — the throne so near.
An old, old story! stale with age —
As the fool prompts, so speaks the sage!

ASTROLOGER (*speaks*, MEPHISTOPHELES *prompting*).

Gold of the purest is the orb of day;
Mercury, the herald, serves for grace and pay;
Dame Venus hath bewitched you, one and all,
On you all hours her loving glances fall.
Chaste Luna's full of whims and fancies light;
Mars, though he strike not, awes you with his might;
And Jupiter shows the loveliest star of all.
Saturn is great, far to the eye and small;

Him lowliest 'mongst the metals do we rate,
Trivial in value, ponderous in weight.
But mark! When Sol and Luna come together,
And gold mates silver, then 'tis finest weather;
Straightway one gets whatever else one seeks,
Parks, palaces, plump bosoms, rosy cheeks.
All this is wrought by that most learned man,
Who can achieve what none amongst us can.

EMPEROR.

His words ring double in all they say;
But they convince me not, not they.

MURMUR.

An idle tale — jest worn and stale!
Star-gazers' dreams — alchemists' schemes!
Things oft told to us — devised to do us!
For all his coaxing, merest hoaxing!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

With foolish stare they stand around;
No faith have they in hidden prizes:
Kobold and gnome one man surmises,
Another prates of the coal-black hound.
What matter, if sorry jokes one crack,
Another at sorcerers' cantrips rail,
If gout his feet with its twinges rack,
And his legs beneath him quake and fail?
Ye all the secret working feel
Of nature's ever-predominant power,
And her living traces this very hour
Up from her nethermost regions steal.
When every bone in your body grows sick,
And a something uncanny stirs in the air,

Then courage! to work with spade and pick!
There lies the fiddler, the treasure is there![1]

MURMUR.

My feet are heavy as lead — that's gout;
Cramps through my arms run in and out;
My great toe burns, and shoots, and twitches;
All over my back there are pains and stitches:
By all these signs it would appear,
There are heaps of richest treasure here.

EMPEROR.

Look sharp! I brook no more delay!
Prove that your frothy flams are true,
And bare these famous piles to view!
Then sword and sceptre I'll put away,
And with my royal hands I will,
If you lie not, the work fulfil;
But if you lie, I'll pack you off to hell!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The road there I at least should know right well!
But, sir, words fail me, adequate to tell
What unowned wealth lies waiting everywhere.
The boor, that through the furrow drives his share,
Turns up a crock of bullion with the mould;
He hopes saltpetre hidden in the clay,
And, half in ecstasy, half in dismay,
In his gaunt fingers finds rouleaux of gold.
But then the arches must be burst,
The chasms, the shafts, through which he must,

[1] The allusion is to a superstition common in Germany, that when people stumble, they are passing over a spot where a musician is buried, — being affected, as certain sensitive people are said to be, on coming to ground under which gold or other minerals lie.

Who's treasure-wise, a passage thrust,
To reach the wondrous world below!
In spacious vaults, strong-barred, untold
Plates, goblets, salvers, all of gold,
He sees around him, row on row.
There ruby-studded beakers stand,
And, if he'd drink from them, at hand
Are fluids aged as the hills.
The casks have long been turned to dust,
But the wine-tartar — if you'll trust
One who knows well — their function fills.
The essences of noble wine,
As well as gold and jewels fine,
Themselves in gruesome night enshrine.
'Tis here the wise man — pray you, mark! —
Unweariedly pursues his quest.
To hunt by daylight were a jest;
The home for mysteries is the dark.

EMPEROR.

That may be so. Gloom! What's the good of that?
Things of true worth are sure to come to light.
Who can detect a rascal in black night?
Your cow in the dark is black, and gray your cat.
These pitchers down below, crammed full of gold,
Do you with ploughshare to the light unfold!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Take spade and pickaxe, dig yourself! The toil
Will make you great, mere peasant's though it be,
And presently, emerging from the soil,
A herd of golden calves will struggle free.
Then in your transports may you without check
Yourself and your fair ladye love bedeck,
For lustrous gems give lustre great
To beauty as well as to royal state.

EMPEROR.

Despatch, despatch! How long are we to wait?

ASTROLOGER.

Such urgent longing, pray, sir, moderate.
First finish off the motley masquing show.
A mind distraught conducts not to the goal.
We must to settled calm compose our soul,
And earn by what's above what is below.
Who would have good things must himself be good.
Who would have joy must temper down his blood.
Who would have wine must lay ripe clusters by, —
Who miracles, his faith must fortify.

EMPEROR.

Then be the time in mirth and frolic spent,
And welcomer will be the coming Lent!
Meanwhile more merrily, whate'er befall,
We'll celebrate the roaring Carnival.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

How merit's coupled with success
Is what your fools can never guess;
If they the wise man's stone possessed,
With wisdom they would not be blest.

SCENE III. — *Spacious Hall, with Apartments adjoining embellished for a masquerade.*

HERALD.

Expect not here old German fancies,
Devils' and fools' and dead men's dances;
A *fête* awaits you gay and bright.
Our master, when he went to Rome,

Has for his profit, your delight,
Crossed the high Alps, and thence brought home
To his fair realm a royal right.
There at the holy feet bowed down,
That right he first devoutly sought,
And, while he went to fetch away his crown,
Away for us the fool's cap with him brought!
Now we are all new-born; and every man
To whom the world has been his school,
O'er head and ears the cap will snugly pull,—
The air it gives him of a crack-brained fool,
And under it he plays sage, as best he can.
Already they break up, I see,
Some into pairs, some into groups;
And in and out unceasingly
The throng of choral singers troops.
Well! With its fooleries untold,
The world is, as it was of old,
A big fool, not to be controlled!

FLOWER GIRLS (*sing, accompanied by mandolins*).

Maids of Florence, by the splendour
Of your Court drawn here are we,
And our tribute thus we render,
Decked in all our bravery.

Woven into our nut-brown tresses
Bright flowers manifold we bear,
Silken streamers, silken jesses
Join to prank it gaily there.

For we hold it meritorious,
And a thing to make us dear,
That our flowers, by art made glorious,
Bloom and blow through all the year.

Sprays of every hue commingle,
In symmetric order placed;
You may slight them, taken single,
But the mass contents your taste.

Comely are we to the eye, as
Girls should be so gay and smart,
For the woman's native bias
Closely is allied with art.

HERALD.

Show your baskets richly freighted,
Those that on your heads are pressed,
Those with which your arms are weighted;
Let each choose what likes him best.
Quick! Till all with leaf and alley
Semblance of a garden bears.
Who but fain with such would dally,
Dealers lovely as their wares?

GARDEN GIRLS.

Choose, then, each at fancy gleaning —
Freely choose, and huckster not!
Tell in few words, full of meaning,
Every one what he hath got.

OLIVE-BRANCH (*with fruit upon it*).

Flowery blooms I envy none,
Strife of every kind I shun;
It doth with my nature jar.
Yet earth holds no gem more fair,
Pledge and token everywhere
Of peace, and what its blessings are.
To-night, I hope, 'twill be my place
Some fair and worthy head to grace!

WHEAT - WREATH (*golden*).

Nought more winning-sweet attireth
Than the gifts by Ceres sent;
What man most for use desireth,
Be your fairest ornament!

FANCY WREATH.

Motley flowers, resembling mallows,
Strangely peep from mosses green;
These are things that fashion hallows,
Though in nature never seen.

FANCY NOSEGAY.

What my name is, to declare
Theophrastus would not dare;
Yet I have my hope I shall
Please a many, if not all.
She that in her hair will wind me,
She that on her breast will bind me,
Shall, if with a will she do it,
Find she has no cause to rue it.

CHALLENGE.

Gaudy fancies, let them flower
For the fashion of the hour,
Form in guises wondrous moulded,
Such as nature ne'er unfolded!
Golden bells and sprays of green
Peer out flowing locks between.
But we —

ROSEBUDS

Shrink from sight.
Happy who on us doth light!
When the winds of summer blow,

Roses kindle then and glow;
Who such happiness would miss?
Promise, then, fulfilment, this
Is in Flora's realm the rule!
Eye, and sense, and heart fed full!
[*The* GARDEN GIRLS *arrange their wares tastefully under green alleys.*

GARDENER (*song accompanied by theorbos*).

Flowery blooms, where you have placed them,
Charmingly your head adorn,
So our fruits you will not scorn;
They'll delight you, if you taste them.

Magnum bonums, cherries, peaches,
Dusky are of hue; but buy!
Worst of judges is the eye;
Trust what tongue or palate teaches.

Let all come where, gladdening eyes
And taste, the choicest fruits invite them;
Men on roses poetise,
Apples, they perforce must bite them.

To your bounteous bloom of youth
Grant us leave, then, to ally us,
And our ripest wares, in sooth,
Shall on you be lavished by us.

In alleys gay that wind about,
In the shade of pleachèd bowers,
You'll find all you want laid out,
Blossoms, foliage, fruit, and flowers.
[*Singing alternately, accompanied by guitars and theorbos, the two Choirs proceed to arrange their wares in rows one above the other, and to offer them for sale.*

MOTHER *and* DAUGHTER.

MOTHER.

O lass, when you first came to the light,
A bonny wee hood I made ye;
Your limbs were so lissome, your face so bright,
You were quite a dainty lady.
What a bride you'll make! to myself I said,
With figure and face so sunny,
And already I pictured you wooed and wed
By a suitor with heaps of money.

But years they have come, and have passed again,
And, alas! you are left on my hands still;
For somehow or other the marrying men
Sweep by you, and none of them stand still.
No fault of yours! For with one you dance,
And flirt it and foot it sprightly;
On another you smile with a coy kind glance,
And cling to his elbow tightly.

Picnic or party, 'twas all the same,
However we might devise them;
Forfeits, Third Man, no kind of game
Could into an offer surprise them.
But all the fools are let loose to-day,
And they're brimming with silly rapture;
So, dearest, your charms without stint display,
And one of them you may capture!

[*Girl playfellows, young and beautiful, join the groups, and break out into a loud chatter of mutual confidences. Fishermen and bird-catchers with nets, fishing-rods, limed twigs, and other implements of their craft, enter and mingle with the girls. Mutual attempts to attract attention, to catch, to escape, and to hold fast, give occasion for pleasant interchange of talk and banter.*

WOODCUTTERS (*enter, boisterous and ungainly*).

Room! room! give place!
We must have space!
Trees we fell;
Down as we tear them,
They crash in the dust!
Off as we bear them,
Come push and thrust.
This to our praise,
Look, that ye tell!
Were no rough men
To work in the land,
Where, tell me, then,
Would your fine folks stand?
This truth, forget it not,
Stretched at your ease,
For, if we sweated not,
You all would freeze!

PUNCHINELLOS (*awkward, almost silly*).

Fools are ye, hacks,
Born with bent backs!
We the wise, who
Burden ne'er knew!
For, look ye, our caps,
Our jackets and flaps,
We carry them lightly,
Gaily and sprightly —
We, ever idle,
Saunter and sidle,
Slippers on feet,
Through market and street,
There to stand gaping,
Crowing and japing;
Under the hubbub loud,
Through the thick thronging crowd,

Eel-like we slip off,
In a mass trip off,
A rumpus to raise.
Whether you praise,
Or whether you blame,
'Tis to us all the same!

PARASITES (*with a wheedling air*).

Ye porters, stout of thew,
And their own brothers, you
Charcoal that burn,
Are the men for our turn.
For bowing and scraping,
Assenting and smiling,
Fine phrases shaping,
Obscure and beguiling,
Framed to blow hot
Or cold, or what not,
Just the moment to please;
What profit all these?
Fire might be given
Straight out of heaven,
In volume enormous;
But how would it warm us,
Had we no billet,
No coal-heaps to throw
On our fireplace, and fill it
With gladdening glow?
Then the steaming and roasting,
The stewing and toasting!
The real gourmet,
The licker of dishes,
Scents the roast by the way,
And surmises the fishes.
This incites him to ply
A robust knife and fork

When his host says, Come, try!
And he tackles to work.

DRUNKEN MAN (*in a stupor*).

Oh, this day shall be happy beyond all measure,
I feel so jolly and free!
Songs to delight you, and holiday leisure,
I have brought you along with me.
And that's why I drink! Drink, drink!
Join glass to glass, boys! Clink, clink!
You behind there, come out to the light!
Strike your glass upon mine! All right!

My wife she jeered at this coat of motley,
And railed as though she my ears would pull;
She fleered and sneered, till I felt it hotly,
And called me a mumming, masking fool.
But I drink for all that! Drink, drink!
Let every glass ring! Clink, clink!
Ye masking mummers, come, all unite!
When the glasses go clink, all's right!

Never say I'm cracked! for my boast is,
I know, when I want, where to get my fill!
If my host won't trust me, why, there's the hostess;
And if she won't do it, the maiden will.
So I drink at all times! Drink, drink!
You fellows there, up! Clink, clink!
Join glass to glass! Keep it up all night!
Things now, I've a notion, are perfectly right!

Leave things as they are! The joys they've made me,
What better could mortal wish to his hand?
All right! let me lie here where I have laid me,
For now on my legs I can no more stand!

CHORUS.

Every good fellow, drink! drink!
Drain down your glasses, clink, clink!
To bench and to board stick while you are able;
He's done for, that fellow there under the table!

[THE HERALD *announces poets of various kinds, Poets of Nature, Court and Ritter Singers, bards sentimental and gushing. In the throng of competitors no one will allow the other to obtain a hearing. One of them throws out a few words as he slips past.*

SATIRIST.

Know ye what were the sweetest thing
For me, a poet among poets here?
This! Were I free to say and sing
What none of them all would wish to hear.

[*The* NIGHT *and* CHURCHYARD POETS *send apologies, because they are just at that moment engaged in an interesting conversation with a Vampyre that has made its appearance recently, out of which a new kind of poetry may perhaps be developed.* THE HERALD *has to accept their excuses, and in the meantime summons the* GREEK MYTHOLOGY, *which, even in modern masquerading costume, loses neither character nor charm.*

THE GRACES.

AGLAIA.

Into life we carry grace!
In your givings give it place.

HEGEMONE.

In receiving grace retain!
Sweet it is a wish to gain.

EUPHROSYNE.

And in days of thoughtful mood,
Let grace sweeten gratitude.

THE PARCÆ.

ATROPOS.

Me, the eldest, have they wooed on,
Here among you all to spin;
Much to think of, much to brood on,
Lies life's fragile thread within.

That it may be pliant, tender,
Flax the finest still I choose;
Smooth to make it, even, and slender,
I shall deftest fingers use.

Should the dance's joyous eddies
Pulses all too quick awake,
Think how very frail this thread is,
And be wary! It may break.

CLOTHO.

Know, of late years they confided
Unto me the shears of dread;
For the way our elder plied it
Had its power discredited.

Spinnings worthless quite, she bore them
Through long years of life and bloom;

Threads of promise rare, she shore them,
Hurried to a timeless tomb!

I myself made many a blunder
In my young and headstrong years;
Now to keep my rashness under,
In its sheath I keep the shears.

Gladly then my hands I fetter;
Kindly I your sports survey;
In these hours of ease, what better
Than give mirth its fullest play?

LACHESIS.

To me, whose judgment wavers never,
Was the task of order given;
So my spindle, circling ever,
Never has been over-driven.

Threads around and round it playing,
I to each its path assign,
None I suffer to go straying,
All into the ball I twine.

Could I pause, myself forgetting,
For the world my heart would ache;
Days and years sink to their setting,
She that weaves the skein will take.

HERALD.

These that are coming now you will not know,
How versed soe'er in ancient lore ye be;
Gazing on these, who work such worlds of woe,
Guests you would think them, men were glad to see.

The Furies they; none will believe us; kind,
Of comely presence, fair withal, and young:
But fall into their hands, and you will find
How serpent-cruelly these doves have stung!

Crafty they are, 'tis true; but nowadays,
When every fool for failings craves renown,
Even they, not coveting, as angels, praise,
Own they're the plagues of country and of town.

ALECTO.

What boots such talk? You'll trust us all the same:
For we are pretty, young, sweet coaxing dears;
If you've a swain has set your heart aflame,
We'll go on pouring flattery in his ears.

Till we dare tell him, eye to eye, his fair
Has smiles for other men as well as him, —
That, if he's pledged his troth, he'd best beware,
For she's a fool, crook-backed, and halt of limb.

And we can make the lady wretched too;
Some weeks ago her friend said slighting things
Of her to some one else. They may, 'tis true,
Be reconciled; still we have left our stings.

MEGÆRA.

That's but a joke! I wait till they are wed,
Then set to work, and poison — such my powers —
Bliss, when it seems more surely perfected;
Men, they are changeful as the changing hours.

Let what he yearned for once be won, all's o'er,
His rapture cools, the prize its charm has lost;
For something else he madly yearns still more,
Flies from the sun, and seeks to warm the frost.

Asmodi here I bring, my henchman true;
Well does he work my will in such affairs,
Mischief broadcast at the right time to strew,
And so destroy the human race in pairs.

TISIPHONE.

Poison, dagger, not backbiting,
Mix I, whet I, for the traitor;
Lov'st thou others, sooner, later,
Shalt thou feel destruction smiting.

Turn to gall and wormwood must
What in sweetness was abounding;
Here no bargaining, no compounding!
Suffer as ye wrought! 'Tis just!

Let none say, "Forgive, forgive!"
To the rocks my plaint I bring.
Hark! "Revenge!" the echoes ring;
Who betrays, he shall not live!

HERALD.

Please, step a little back, you there behind;
For what comes next is of no common kind.
Onward a mountain works its way, you see,
Swathed on its flanks in gorgeous tapestry.
Long tusks, a snake-like snout, its head are on;
A mystery! But I'll show the key anon.
Gracefully on its neck a fair girl rides,
And with a slender staff its movements guides;
Another stands above, of stately height,
Begirt with radiance dazzling to the sight.
Two noble dames walk, chained, on either side,
One blithe and bright, one sad and sober-eyed;
One yearns to be, one feels that she is, free.
Let each of these declare, who, what is she.

FEAR.

Through this revel wild the light
Of lamps and torches flares around;
Traitor faces throng my sight,
And I, alas! in chains am bound.

Hence, ye laughers, brainless, loud,
From your grins I shrink in fear;
All that mean me mischief crowd
Close to-night around me here.

Here a friend has grown a foe;
Read him through his mask I may:
There is one would kill me; lo!
Now, found out, he slinks away!

Ah, how gladly would I fly
Through the wide world anywhere!
But destruction dogs me — I
Hang 'twixt darkness and despair.

HOPE.

Hail, beloved sisters, hail!
If these mumming sports prevail
Here to-night, as yester-e'en,
Yet to-morrow, well I ween,
You will doff your masking gear.
If we find no special pleasure
In the torches' flare, we shall
Anon in days of sunny leisure,
And with none to thwart us near,
Now with others, now alone,
Roam at will, by waters clear,
Meads with bright flowers overgrown.
Living lives exempt from care,
With nor want nor idlesse there.

Welcome guests where'er we go,
In we pass with easy mind;
For the best of cheer, we know,
Somewhere we are sure to find.

PRUDENCE.

Two of men's worst foes are these;
In chains I hold them — Hope and Fear —
From the crowd they else would seize.
You are saved. A pathway clear!

I this live Colossus lead;
Though a tower is on his back,
Unfatigued, with steady speed,
See, he climbs the steepest track!

But upon its summit, lo!
A goddess, with wings swift and wide
Waving lightly to and fro,
As she turns to every side!

Light plays round her, pure and glorious,
Sheds afar a wondrous sheen;
Victory is her name — victorious
Goddess of great deeds, and queen!

ZOILO - THERSITES.

Ugh! ugh! I come, though no one call:
Fools that you are, I chide you all;
But what I chiefly will not spare
Is Madam Victory up there!
With her white wings, she fancies, she
An eagle at the least must be,

And that, where'er she looks or stirs,
Country and people both are hers.
But let some field of fame be won,
And straight my fighting gear I don.
When high turns low, and low turns high,
The crookèd straight, the straight awry —
Then, only then, I feel aglow;
All through the globe I'd have things so.

HERALD.

Then, thou vile cur, the swashing blow
Of my good staff on thee I lay!
Now crawl and wriggle as you may!
How quickly has the dwarfish elf
Up in a bundle rolled himself!
The ball becomes an egg! — oh wonder! —
Puffs itself out, and bursts asunder!
Out comes a strange twin-growth quite pat,
An adder one, and one a bat.
One crawls off in the dust; his brother
Up to the roof flies like a bird:
Outside they'll shortly join each other,
There I've no wish to make a third.

MURMURS.

Come on! They're dancing there behind.
No! To be off I have a mind.
Do you not feel, how all about
Us flits the ghost and goblin rout?
Now they go swish above my hair —
About my feet I feel them there!
None have been hurt in flesh or bone,
But all are into panic thrown.
The sport is wholly spoiled; but this
Was what these monsters wished, I wis.

HERALD.

Since unto me the Herald's task
Has been entrusted for our mask,
I watch the door with anxious care,
Lest aught amiss should unaware
Into our festive circle steal.
No terror for myself I feel,
But much I fear, the airy crew
Of ghosts may slip the windows through;
Nor could I, if with you they mix,
Protect you from their wizard tricks.
The dwarf looked ominous to begin,
And now a swarm comes pouring in.
What every figure means, am I
In duty bound to signify;
But how may I expound to you
What is to me a mystery too?
To clear things up, assist me all!
What's this, winds yonder through the hall?
A gorgeous chariot sweeps along,
Drawn by a team of four-in-hand;
And yet it does not part the throng —
I see no crowd about it stand.
Far off with many-coloured beams
It shines, while flitting round it gleams
The light of many a starry zone,
As from a magic lantern thrown.
On, on, it snorts with giant force!
Room there! I shudder!

BOY - CHARIOTEER.

Stay your course!
Ye coursers, fold your wings! Obey
The bridle's well-accustomed sway.
Rein in yourselves, whilst you I rein;
When I incite, dash on amain.

Unto these halls due honour show.
Look how the people, row on row,
Keep gathering round with wondering eyes!
Speak, herald, speak, in proper wise,
Before we go, our name to tell,
And who and what we are as well;
For we are allegories — so
Us you are clearly bound to know!

HERALD.

Name you I cannot. Easier far
It were to paint you as you are.

BOY-CHARIOTEER.

Essay it then.

HERALD.

That you are fair
And young withal, one must declare;
A boy half-grown; yet women fain
Would see you fully grown. 'Tis plain,
You'll prove in time a pretty rake,
And with the sex rare havoc make.

BOY-CHARIOTEER.

Not badly said. Proceed! and see
If of the riddle you can find the key.

HERALD.

Dark flashing eyes, locks black as night, and there
A jewelled circlet 'mid the blackness glowing;
A robe that falls in graceful folds you wear,
Down from the shoulders to the buskins flowing.
With purple hem, and fringe of tissue rare,

Rail at you for a girl one fairly might;
Yet even now, for weal or woe, you'd be
For girls themselves an object of delight;
They'd give you lessons in love's A B C.

BOY - CHARIOTEER.

And he, this stately form, that gleams
Enthroned this car of mine within?

HERALD.

A very king, rich, mild, he seems,
Whose grace it were rare luck to win.
Nought's left for him to wish for here;
Quick to descry where aught is wanting,
Wealth, state, to him are far less dear
Than the pure joy of giving, granting.

BOY - CHARIOTEER.

To stop with this will not avail;
You must describe in more detail.

HERALD.

What's worthiest words never drew.
But the broad healthy visage, fine
Full mouth, the cheeks of ruddy hue,
That 'neath the jewelled turban shine,
His flowing vestments' rich array, —
What of his bearing shall I say?
In him one used to rule I see.

BOY - CHARIOTEER.

Plutus, the God of Wealth, is he.
He comes himself in regal state;
The Emperor's need of him is great.

HERALD.

Now of yourself the What and How proclaim!

BOY-CHARIOTEER.

I am Profusion, Poesy my name!
The poet I, who works to noblest ends
When his best wealth he most profusely spends.
Rich beyond measure, too, I am; and dare
Myself in this with Plutus to compare.
To dance and revel I give charm and soul,
And what he lacks, dispense without control.

HERALD.

This vaunt becomes you well; but we
Some of these arts of yours would see.

BOY-CHARIOTEER.

I snap my fingers! There! And lo!
Around the car what gleam and glow!
Out leaps a string of pearls!
[*Goes on snapping his fingers.*
And here
Are golden clasps for throat and ear!
Combs, too, and heaps of diadems,
And rings ablaze with rarest gems!
Small flames, too, here and there I scatter;
Kindle or not, is no great matter.

HERALD.

How these good people snatch and rush!
The giver's self they almost crush.
'Tis like a dream, the way gems fly
Off from his fingers, far and nigh.
But lo! another juggling sleight!
A sorry prophet gets the wight

From what so eagerly he clutched;
The gift slips off as soon as touched!
The pearls unstring themselves, and all
About his hand cockchafers crawl,
He shakes them off, poor fool, and straight
They buzz and flutter round his pate.
What others thought a solid prize
Turns into flighty butterflies.
For all his promises so fine,
The knave gives only golden shine!

BOY CHARIOTEER.

Masks, I observe, you indicate full well,
But to proclaim what lives within the shell
Is no part of a herald's courtly task;
That doth a keener insight ask.
But wrangle I abhor; my lord, and king,
To thee I turn my speech and questioning.
[*Turning to* PLUTUS.
Didst not to me, their course to guide,
This fourfold fiery team confide?
Drive I not well, thou standing o'er me?
Do I not reach the goals thou set'st before me?
Have I not known, with daring sweep,
The palm for thee to win and keep?
Often for thee as I have fought,
When have I ever failed? And now,
If the proud laurel decks thy brow,
Have not my brain and hand the chaplet wrought?

PLUTUS.

If need there be that I my tribute pay,
Soul of my soul art thou!" I gladly say.
Thy acts are echoes of my mind and heart;
Far, far more wealthy than myself thou art.

As guerdon for thy services, I rate
The bays more high than all my crowns of state.
Then hear me all aloud declare my mind,
"My darling son, in thee great joy I find!"

BOY CHARIOTEER (*to the crowd*).

The greatest gifts my hand shakes out;
See! I have sent them all about.
On this, and now on yonder head
A flamelet glows, which I have shed;
From one it to another leaps,
Slips off from this, by that it keeps;
Now here and there it shoots on high,
And flames with short-lived brilliancy,
But, with the most, burns sad and low,
And then goes out before they know.

CHATTER OF WOMEN.

The man, up yonder on his feet,
Beyond all question is a cheat.
Crouching behind is Hanswurst, so
By thirst and hunger wasted low,
As never Hanswurst was before.
Pinch him, he will not feel it sore.

THE STARVELING.

Avaunt, ye odious womenkind!
I know I'm never to your mind.
Whilst dames their households overhauled,
Then I was AVARITIA called:
Then flourished in our homes content,
For much came in, out nothing went!
My care was all for chest and bin!
Folks tell us now, this was a sin!
But as the wife in these last days
Has quite given up those saving ways,

And, as all evil payers are,
Has more desires than cash by far,
Her husband has a deal to bear;
Debts crowd upon him everywhere.
All that she earns by spinning goes
In treating swains, or in fine clothes;
Richly she feeds, drinks largely too,
With paramours, a baleful crew.
So on gold's charms I fondlier feed;
And now, turned masculine, I am GREED.

LEADER OF THE WOMEN.

Dragon with dragon may pinch and spare;
This is all lying, juggling stuff!
He comes to rouse the men, and they're
Already troublesome enough.

WOMEN (*en masse*).

The scarecrow! Box his ears! What, dare
To threaten us! As if he could
Grown women with his rubbish scare!
The dragons are but paste and wood:
Come, let's go at him, squeeze and tear!

HERALD.

Now, by my staff! keep order there!
Yet for my help there scarce is need;
See how the monsters grim unfurl —
As swift the flying crowds recede —
Great wings, that round them wave and swirl!
The dragons snort, and gnash in ire
Their scaly jaws, outbelching fire:
The crowd has fled, the place is clear.
[PLUTUS *descends from the chariot.*
How kingly all his movements are!
The dragons at his nod draw near;

They lift the coffer from the car,
And Gold and Greed on it appear.
There at his feet it stands; but how
The thing was done, I marvel now.

PLUTUS (*to the* CHARIOTEER).

Now from the charge, that all too heavy lay
On thee, thou'rt free: to thine own sphere away!
Here it is not; wild, tawdry, full of din
Is the fantastic world here hems us in.
Only where thou through clear untroubled air
Look'st with untroubled eye — there, only there,
Where nought delights thee but the good, the fair,
Art thou thyself, canst move with soul elate.
To solitude then go! There thine own world create!

BOY CHARIOTEER.

So as an envoy still myself I prize,
Charged with a noble mission from above;
So thee, as bound to me by nearest ties
Of kindred and of sympathy, I love.
Where thou art, there is plenty; and where I,
All feel their souls enriched, their pulse beat high.
Ofttime from side to side men's thoughts incline;
Shall they to thee or me themselves resign?
Thy votaries may in idlesse rest, 'tis true,
But mine have always endless work to do.
Nor may I work in secret and in shade;
Let me but breathe, at once I am betrayed.
Farewell! Thou grantest what is bliss to me;
But back again I at a word will be. [*Exit as he came*

PLUTUS.

Now it is time to set the treasures free.
With the Herald's rod I strike the bolts, and lo!

The chest flies open! In steel caldrons, see,
Red golden blood heaves, bubbling, to and fro!
Hard by are ornaments, ring, chain, and crown;
It swells as 'twould engulf and melt them down.

ALTERNATING EXCLAMATIONS OF THE CROWD.

See here! see there! How treasures brim!
The chest is full up to the rim!
Vessels of gold melt down, and whole
Rouleaux of gold by dozens roll.
Ducats leap out, new-minted, bright —
Oh, how my heart leaps at the sight!
All it desired I see, and more;
There they go sprawling on the floor!
They're offered you. Quick! On them swoop!
If you'd be rich, you've but to stoop.
We, quick as lightning, shall the great
Chest to ourselves appropriate.

HERALD.

What would ye, fools? Are you possessed?
'Tis but a masquerading jest:
To-night we looked for nothing more.
Think you we'd give you gold galore?
Why, truly, on occasions such
Counters for you are quite too much.
Blockheads! with you a quaint device
Grows fact substantial in a trice.
What's fact to you, — you, always fain
To flounder in delusions vain?
O Plutus, send this rabble rout,
I pray thee, to the right about!

PLUTUS.

Handy for that your staff would be,
For some few moments lend it me.

I dip it in the red heat; there!
And now, ye maskers, have a care!
What sparkling, sputtering, in the pot!
The staff's already fiery hot.
Whoever comes too near shall be
Scorched by it quite remorselessly.
Look out! Now is my round begun!

CRIES AND TUMULT.

Oh, woe! oh, woe! we're all undone!
Let him escape, escape who may.
You there behind, back, back, I say!
Hot sparks fly out into my face.
On me the red-hot staff falls heavy:
We're all and each in piteous case!
Back, back, ye masquerading bevy!
Back, back! 'Tis madness to come nigh!
Oh, had I wings, away I'd fly!

PLUTUS.

Back hath the surging throng been thrust;
And no one has been hurt, I trust.
In sheer dismay
The crowd give way:
Still, as a guarantee for order, we
Will draw a circle none can see.

HERALD.

'Twas nobly done! A power so sage
As thine must my best thanks engage.

PLUTUS.

Still, friend, be patient. There will be
Tumult in plenty presently.

GREED.

A man may round him here with pleasure glance,
If meetings of this kind his fancy suit,
For women always are well in advance,
When there be shows or junketings on foot.
I'm not yet quite used up, not quite pumped dry,
I like a pretty woman with the best;
And, as to-night it costs me nothing, I
Will go a-wooing with especial zest.
Yet as, in such a crowd as we have here,
All that one says may fail to reach the ear,
I'll try, and, as I hope too, with success,
In pantomime my meaning to express.
Hand, foot, and gesture will not do alone,
So I must try some cantrip of my own.
I'll treat the gold as though 'twere moistened clay
For we may turn this metal any way.

HERALD.

The meagre fool, what is he at?
Humour in a scarecrow like that!
The gold, he kneads it into dough;
Soft 'neath his fingers it doth grow,
But, squeeze and turn it how he will,
The mass remains quite shapeless still.
He to the women turns, but they
All scream, and try to get away,
And show he'll ne'er be in their books.
There's mischief in the rascal's looks.
I fear his lickerish tooth he'll sate,
Though he decorum violate.
Not to speak out were sore offence;
Give me my staff to drive him hence!

PLUTUS.

He dreams not of what coming dangers loom.
Let him pursue his pranks a little longer;

For his mad capers there will be no room;
Though law be strong, necessity is stronger.
[*Enter Fauns, Satyrs, Nymphs, etc., in attendance upon Pan, and heralding his approach.*

TUMULT AND SONG.

From mountain-height and forest-dell
The savage crew with shout and yell
Sweep on, and stay them no one can;
They celebrate their mighty Pan.
They know what none else know, and fling
Themselves into the vacant ring.

PLUTUS.

You and your mighty Pan, I know you well,
How bold the step you've taken here can tell:
Full well I know what's known to none beside,
So throw our narrow bounds here open wide.
Good luck attend you, even to overflowing!
Great marvels may anon befall.
They know not whither they are going;
They have not looked ahead at all.

WILD SONG.

Ye butterflies, with gewgaws decked,
A rough and rugged hand expect.
With leaps and bounds they come apace,
A stalwart and a sturdy race.

FAUNS.

We are Fauns, and we
Dance merrily;
Oak-wreaths we wear
In our crispèd hair,
And out from our curly head an ear,
Sharpened to finest point, doth peer;

Our noses are stumpy, our faces flat,
But we lose not woman's good will for that;
The fairest she, if a Faun advance
His paw, will scarcely refuse to dance.

SATYR.

The Satyr next comes bounding in,
With hoof of goat and wizened shin —
Both sinewy, of course, and thin!
To gaze around from mountain-heights,
Like the wild chamois, him delights.
There in the free air bounding wild,
He views with scorn man, woman, child,
Who, 'mid the low vales' smoke and steam
Deem fondly they are living too;
Whilst he, unlettered and supreme,
Reigns sole that upper region through.

GNOMES.

A pigmy troop comes tripping now,
Not two by two, but anyhow;
In mossy garb, with lamplets lit,
Swiftly they each through other flit,
Each working for himself, and so
They swarm like fireflies to and fro —
Now here, now there, and all intent
Upon the task whereto they're bent.
To the "Good People" near related,
As rock-chirurgoeons celebrated,
We cap the lofty hills, we drain
The ore from every teeming vein;
"Good luck!" as greeting cheers us, while
The metals up in heaps we pile.
Tis all meant for a worthy end.
All truly good men we befriend;

Yet gold we to the light reveal,
That men may pimp with it and steal,
And steel to tyrants proud be lent,
Who are on wholesale murder bent.
These three commandments who shall slight,
Of all the rest makes very light.
But this is not our fault; so you
Should have, like us, forbearance too.

GIANTS.

The Wild Men we are called, and strange
To none who know the Harzberg range;
Of giant bulk, unclad, and strong
As men of yore, we tramp along,
A pine-tree stem in our right hand,
Around our loins a padded band.
With leaf and bough for apron barred;
The Pope has no such body-guard.

CHORUS OF NYMPHS.

(*They surround the great Pan.*)

He too comes here!
All unto man
In this earth's sphere
Is imaged clear
In mighty Pan.
Ye merriest of heart, advance,
And round him wheel in joyous dance;
For, being grave, but also good,
He'd have men be of cheerful mood.
Even 'neath the azure-vaulted sky
He watches with unsleeping eye:
But brooks for him low murmurs keep,
And soft winds cradle him to sleep,
And, when at noon he 'gins to drowse,
Stirs not a leaf upon the boughs;

Plants, breathing health from fairest blooms,
On the hushed air exhale perfumes;
The Nymph disports no more, but, where
She stood, drops off in slumber there.
But if, by sudden anger stirred,
His voice, his mighty voice, is heard
Like thunder, or wild ocean's swell,
Which way to fly no man can tell;
Brave hosts are scattered in dismay
And heroes quail in mid *mêlée*.
Then honour give where honour's due;
Hail him who led us here to you!

DEPUTATION OF GNOMES (*to the great Pan*).

Where rich ore lies, and, brightly shining,
Through rocky fissures thread-like steals,
The rod alone, by its divining,
The labyrinthine maze reveals.

In troglodytic fashion now
Our home in sunless caves we make,
And in the sunshine pure dost thou
Deal treasures forth for us to take.

Hard by to us has been revealed
A vein of wondrous breadth and scope,
Which promises with ease to yield
What to attain we scarce might hope.

To make it sure thou hast the power —
Then subject it to thy commands;
To all mankind a priceless dower
Grows every treasure in thy hands.

PLUTUS (*to the* HERALD).

All base misgivings we must cast away,
And with composure meet come what come may.

Erst thou hast shown a firm courageous soul.
But something terrible will soon fall out,
That present time and after-time will doubt;
So write it duly in thy protocol.

HERALD.

(*Grasping the staff which* PLUTUS *holds in his hands.*)

The dwarfs lead great Pan soft and slow
To where the fount of fire doth glow;
It seethes up from the abyss below,
Then down to depths unseen sinks back,
And grim the wide mouth stands and black.
Again fierce flames flash out on high —
The great Pan stands complacent by,
Joying to see such wondrous sight —
And pearl-foam sparkles left and right.
How can he trust himself so near?
He stoops, into the chasm to peer —
And now his beard falls in: and he,
With chin so smooth, who may he be?
His hand conceals his face from view.
Now doth a great mishap ensue.
The beard takes fire, flies back again,
And wreath, head, breast, all blaze up too;
So joy is turned to fear and pain!
The crowd rush to his aid, but none
Escapes the spreading flames, not one;
And, as they flash and dart about,
Fresh fire on every hand breaks out;
While, netted in the burning maze,
A troop of maskers is ablaze.
But hark! a cry, that scatters fear
From mouth to mouth, from ear to ear!
O night, with endless sorrow fraught,
On us what anguish hast thou brought!

To-morrow's dawn will tidings bring,
That every heart with grief shall wring.
Still from all sides I hear the cry,
"The Emperor is in agony!"
Too true, alas! the news unmeet!
The Emperor's burning, and his suite.
Accursed be they beguiled him, wound
With leaves and resinous branches round,
In roistering guise to brawl it here,
And spread disaster far and near!
O youth, youth, wilt thou never draw
Around thy joys a prudent line?
O greatness, wilt thou ne'er with law
And reason boundless power combine?
Now to the wood the flames have spread,
Their forkèd tongues shoot high o'erhead,
And round the wooden rafters play;
Nought can the conflagration stay!
Brimmed is the measure of our grief;
I know not who may bring relief.
Imperial splendour, rich and bright,
Sinks down to ashes in a night.

PLUTUS.

Enough of terror and dismay!
Now let help come into play.
Strike, staff of power, until the ground
Quake and reverberate the sound!
Thou wide and mantling air, fill full
Thyself with breezes blowing cool!
Teeming streaks of vapourous mist,
Come, and round us coil and twist;
Close the fiery ferment over!
Cloudlets, drizzling, dropping, drenching,
Dew-distilling, gently hover,
Everywhere the danger quenching,
Turning by your soothing might

Flames now laden with affright
Into harmless rosy light!
When spirits threaten us with ill,
'Tis time to use our magic skill.

SCENE IV. — *Pleasure-garden. Morning Sun.*

The EMPEROR, *his Court, male and female.* FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, *dressed quietly and becomingly in the prevailing fashion. Both kneel.*

FAUST.

Dost thou forgive our trick, sir, with the fire?

EMPEROR (*beckoning to him to rise*).

Such jests, and many too, I much desire.
Sudden I found me in a sphere of flame;
Pluto himself, methought, I then became.
Girt by thick night a cavern round me lay,
Red-hot with fire. From many a chasm and bay
Wild whirling flames by myriads ascended,
And in an arching vault their flashing blended.
Up to the topmost dome they rose, and crossed,
For ever kindling and for ever lost.
Far, far along, 'midst columns all aglow,
I saw long lines of people moving slow.
In a wide circle round me then they drew,
And made obeisance, as they always do:
Some of my Court I spied within the ring,
And seemed of thousand Salamanders king.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And so you are; for every element
To own your sovereignty is well content.

Fire thou hast proved obedient; in the sea
Plunge, where its billows wildest, maddest be,
And scarcely shalt thou tread the pearl-strewn floor,
Ere springs a stately dome to arch it o'er;
Waves of pale green, with purple edged, shall there
Sway up and down, to rear a mansion fair
Round thee, the central point. A palace home
Attends on thee wherever thou dost roam.
The very walls are all alive, and flow
With swiftness as of arrows to and fro.
Up to the strange soft sheen sea-wonders throng —
They dare not enter in, but shoot along;
Bright gold-scaled dragons round thee sport and swim;
Gapes the grim shark, and thou canst laugh at him.
Gay as thy present Court may be, and bright,
No throng like this has ever met thy sight.
Yet art thou not cut off from beauty there:
To that superb abode, so fresh, so fair,
The Nereids, peering curiously, draw nigh —
The young ones, amorous as fish, and shy,
The old ones sage: soon Thetis learns thy haunts,
And hand and lip to her new Peleus grants.
Anon thy seat on high Olympus' crest —

EMPEROR.

Those airy regions, you may let them rest.
Quite soon enough one has to mount that throne.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And earth, my liege, already is thine own.

EMPEROR.

What lucky chance has brought thee hither straight
From the Arabian Nights? If thou canst mate
With Scheherezade in inventive skill,
Take this, the highest proof of my good will —

Be still at hand, when worries of the day
Pain and dispirit me, as oft they may.

MARSHAL (*entering hurriedly*).

Your Highness, never did I think to live
Tidings of such supreme good-luck to give
As these, which to thy presence thus
Send me in transports rapturous.
Every outstanding bill is squared,
The usurer's ruthless claws are pared.
I from the pangs of hell am free;
In heaven things could not brighter be.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF (*follows hurriedly*).

Arrears paid off to the last sou,
The army's all sworn in of new;
The trooper feels his blood aflame,
And wench and tapster make their game.

EMPEROR.

How is't you breathe so freely now?
Furrows no longer seam your brow.
What makes you here so swiftly run?

TREASURER (*entering*).

Ask those, sir, who the work have done!

FAUST.

'Tis meet, the Chancellor the facts should state.

CHANCELLOR.

In my old days my happiness how great!
Hear, then, and see this fateful scroll, for this
Has turned our woe and wailing into bliss. [*Reads.*
"Be it to all whom it concerneth known,

This note is worth a thousand crowns alone,
And, for a guarantee, the wealth untold,
Throughout the empire buried, it doth hold.
Means are on foot this treasure bare to lay,
And out of it the guarantee to pay."

EMPEROR.

Crime I surmise, some monstrous fraud. Oh, shame!
Who dared to counterfeit the Emperor's name?
Has he been brought to punishment condign?

TREASURER.

Reflect! That note, sir, thou thyself didst sign
Only last night. Thou didst as Pan appear;
The Chancellor said to thee, — we standing near, —
"A few strokes of thy pen, and so thou'lt seal, —
This revel's crowning joy, — thy people's weal!"
These strokes thou mad'st, which were ere morning-tide
By thousand hands in thousands multiplied.
That all alike the benefit might reap,
We stamped the whole impression in a heap;
Tens, thirties, fifties, hundreds, off they flew —
You can't conceive the good they were to do.
Look at your town, — 'twas mouldering and half dead —
Now all alive, and full of lustihead!
High as thy name stood with the world, somehow
'Twas never looked so kindly on as now.
The lists of applicants fill to excess;
This scrip is rushed at as a thing to bless.

EMPEROR.

My people take it for good gold, you say?
In Court, in camp, it passes for full pay?
Strange! strange! Yet I must let the matter drop.

MARSHAL.

'Twere hopeless now the flying leaves to stop;
With lightning speed they spread throughout the land.
The money-changers' doors wide open stand;
They cash the notes with silver and with gold,
And even allow a premium, I am told.
Thence they reach vendors of meat, bread, and drinks:
One-half the world of feasting only thinks;
Whilst in its bran-new clothes the other struts —
Briskly the tailor sews, the mercer cuts.
Toasting thy health in taverns never bates,
And all is roast and boil and clattering plates.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Who on the terraced walks alone shall stray,
Drops on some fair one, clad in rich array,
Who from behind proud peacock-fan will smile
On him, with eye on these same notes the while,
Which quickly will love's crowning favours gain,
Whilst wit and eloquence may plead in vain.
Men won't be teased with purse or scrip, when they
Can in their bosoms slip a note away,
To mate there snugly with a billet-doux.
Priests lodge them in their breviaries, too;
Soldiers, to move more freely, turn their coins
To notes, and of the waist-belt ease their loins.
Pardon, your Majesty, if what I state
From this great work may seem to derogate.

FAUST.

The superflux of wealth that, heap on heap,
All o'er thy realm in earth lies buried deep,
Is practically lost. Thought cannot cast
A limit wide enough for wealth so vast,
And fancy in her wildest flight may strain
To picture it, yet find the effort vain;

But spirits, meet enigmas dark to face,
Dare on the boundless boundless faith to place.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Paper like this, instead of pearls and gold,
Is handy, for we know then what we hold;
No need to change or chaffer! Men at will
In love may revel, drink of wine their fill:
If coin they lack, the changer's prompt with it;
And when coin fails, you've but to dig a bit.
Chalice and chain to auction must be brought;
But this good paper, cashed upon the spot,
Puts skeptics, who dared scoff at us, to shame.
People, once used to it, nought else will name.
So henceforth all the imperial regions round
With jewels, gold, and paper-cash abound.

EMPEROR.

This mighty boon our empire owes to you;
Great as the service, be the guerdon too!
Our kingdom's nether soil, be that your care.
Who may so well protect the treasures there?
That vast well-tended hoard you understand,
And, if men dig, 'tis you must give command.
Now, masters of our Treasury, embrace;
Wear, and with pride, the honours of your place
Where, linked in happy union, all shall know,
The world above blends with the world below.

TREASURER.

'Twixt us no strife, however slight, shall stir:
I for a colleague love your sorcerer.

[*Exit with* FAUST.

EMPEROR.

As I dispense my gifts among you now,
Let each the use he'll put them to avow.

PAGE (*as he takes the gift*).

I am for sports, and mirth, and junketings.

ANOTHER PAGE (*même jeu*).

Straightway I'll buy my sweetheart chains and rings.

LORD OF THE BEDCHAMBER (*même jeu*).

My cellar, with the choicest wine I'll stock it.

SECOND LORD (*même jeu*).

The dice already rattle in my pocket.

BANNERET (*musingly*).

I'll free my castle and my grounds from debt.

ANOTHER BANNERET (*même jeu*).

Aside with other treasures this I'll set.

EMPEROR.

I hoped for joy, brave heart, fresh enterprise;
But, knowing you, one might your course surmise.
Full well I note, howe'er your coffers fill,
What you have been, you will continue still.

FOOL (*advancing*).

You're scattering favours; give me some, I pray.

EMPEROR.

Alive again! You'll drink them all away.

FOOL.

These magic leaves, I cannot make them out.

EMPEROR.

Quite so; you'll make bad use of them, no doubt.

FOOL.

There others drop; what, sir, am I to do?

EMPEROR.

Just pick them up. They're what were meant for you.
[*Exit.*

FOOL.

Five thousand crowns! and all for me?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

How then!
Thou paunch upon two legs, got up again?

FOOL.

Not the first time, but ne'er such luck I've met.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

So great your joy, it puts you in a sweat.

FOOL.

Look here! And is this money's worth?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yes, knave!
You'll get for it what throat and belly crave.

FOOL.

Can I buy farm, house, cattle, then, with this?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Of course! Just bid! 'Twill never come amiss.

FOOL.

What! castle, forest-chase, and fish-stream?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Good!
I'd like to see you a great lord, I would!

FOOL.

This night I'll sleep within my own domain! [*Exit*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*solus*).

Who still can doubt our fool doth bear a brain?

SCENE V. — *A Dark Gallery.*

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why drag me to this gloomy corridor?
Within there is there not enough of sport,
For jest and trick not ample scope, and more,
Among the motley butterflies of court?

FAUST.

Tush, tush! Time was when you were cap in hand,
Ready to come and go at my command;
But now your only aim, I see,
Is how to break your faith with me.
To act, however, I am pressed.
Marshal and chamberlain won't let me rest:

The emperor wants, and that with haste,
Paris and Helena before him placed.
These paragons of man and woman he
Has set his mind just as they lived to see.
Quick, to the task! My word I dare not break.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Such promise you were worse than mad to make.

FAUST.

You have forgotten, mate, to what
Your clever sleights conduct us; we
Have made him rich, and after that
We must amuse him *à tout prix.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No sooner said, you think, than done?
This task is a much harder one
Than ever we ventured on before.
You would pierce to a region of wonders vast,
And recklessly run up a further score
Of debts you'll be forced to pay off at last.
You think 'tis as easy a task for me
To conjure up Helena, at my will,
As it was the imperial treasury
With flimsy, fairy bank-notes to fill.
Witches, imps, goitred dwarfs, and sprites,
I can turn to all uses, and place in all plights,
But, though not to be sneezed at, our ladies below
As heroines never will do to show.

FAUST.

The same old song! The same old introduction!
There's nothing but uncertainties with you:

You are the sire of all sorts of obstruction,
And must at every turn be bribed anew!
You grumble. Still you'll do it, I know well,
And fetch them here, ere we ten words can say.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These heathen gentry are not in my way;
They live within their own peculiar hell;
And yet there is a way!

FAUST.

On with your tale!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I'm loath the higher mysteries to unveil.
There are goddesses, beings of might supernal,
That sit alone, each on a throne,
In the solitudes eternal.
Round them space is not, and time still less;
To speak of them even embarrasses.
These are THE MOTHERS!

FAUST (*starting*).

The Mothers!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Afeared?

FAUST.

The Mothers! the Mothers! That sounds so weird!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And weird it is. Divinities, to you
Mortals unknown; we're loath to name them, too.

Through depths unplumbed you may their haunts
invade:
'Tis all your fault that we require their aid.

FAUST.

And whither lies the road?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Road there is none
To what has been, and must untrodden still be;
There is no road to what was never won
By mortal prayer or vow, nor ever will be.
Art ready? Neither bolt nor bar is there,
To hinder thy advance, but everywhere
Shalt thou be drifted by the empty air.
Canst thou conceive and fully comprehend
A void and isolation without end?

FAUST.

Such speeches 'tis idle with me to try!
They're of the Witches-kitchen kind,
And smack of a time that is long gone by.
Was I not doomed to mingle with mankind?
To learn and teach that all that they possess
Is mere vacuity and emptiness?
By reason schooled, if as I saw I spoke,
Strife and denial round me roared and broke,
Turn where I might, still baffled, thwarted, I
To wilds and solitudes was forced to fly,
Till, at my very loneliness aghast,
I gave myself up to the devil at last.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And with the ocean if thou wert contending.
And round thee heaved a limitless expanse,

Yet there, though death were in each wave impending,
Thou'dst see before thee wave on wave advance.
There something thou shouldst see; see dolphins leap
O'er the green hollows of the glassy deep,
See clouds sweep on, and sun, and moon, and star,
But nothing shalt thou see in that great void afar;
Thou shalt not hear thy very footfall pace,
Nor light on one substantial resting-place.

FAUST.

The best of mystagogues you rival quite,
That e'er deluded trustful neophyte!
But you reverse the rule, dismissing me
To gain both strength and skill from blank vacuity.
You use me like the cat, to scratch for you
The chestnuts from the coals. Well, well, go to!
We'll probe this business; and I hope I shall
In what you say is Nought discover All.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Before we part, your courage I commend!
The devil, I see, you fully comprehend.
Here, take this key!

FAUST.

This tiny bauble? No!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Take hold of it, before you slight it so.

FAUST.

It grows within my hand! It flames, it lightens!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Mark it but well, you'll find its virtue brightens!
This key will how to shape your course instruct you.
Follow it, and to THE MOTHERS 'twill conduct you.

FAUST (*shudders*).

Again that word! It strikes me like a blow.
What is there in that word to thrill me so?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Art thou a pedant, at new words to scare?
Familiar phrases only canst thou bear?
Nothing, however weird or strange, should make
One so long used to mightiest marvels quake.

FAUST.

I covet not an adamantine heart.
This shuddering awe is man's divinest part.
Howe'er the world may dull our feelings, still
At what is vast and mystical we thrill.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Sink, then! I might as well say, Mount! 'Tis quite
The same. From all that is take flight
Into the void and viewless Infinite
Of visionary dreams, and revel so
'Midst phantoms of the ages long ago!
Like clouds they flit and waver. In thy hand
Swing high the key! Thy body must not touch it.

FAUST (*with enthusiasm*).

'Tis well! I feel new strength, as thus I clutch it,
And for the mighty task my breast expand.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A flaming tripod shall proclaim thou hast
Into the nethermost abysses passed.
Its gleam THE MOTHERS unto thee will show.
Some sit, some stand, some wander to and fro;
Each as it haps; strange shapes of every kind,
The eternal pastime of the eternal mind,
Circle them round with every form of being.
Thee they behold not, phantasms only seeing.
See that thou quail not, for the peril's great,
But to the tripod go thou forward straight,
And touch it with the key!

[FAUST *assumes a resolute and commanding attitude with the key.*

Ay, that will do!
It will attend thee like a servant true,
And with it thou, if fortunate, shalt rise
To earth again, ay, fast as fancy flies.
And, it once here, thou mayest by its might
Evoke those famed heroic forms from Night:
The foremost who has e'er achieved such feat;
And when it is done, and thy task complete,
Forthwith, by sleights of magic, timely suited,
The incense smoke to gods will be transmuted.

FAUST.

And now what else?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thy spirit downward bend;
Sink with a stamp, and, stamping, reascend!

[FAUST *stamps, and sinks into the ground.*

Now, if the key its power with him should lack?
I'm curious to see if he comes back.

SCENE VI. — *A Hall Brilliantly Illuminated.*

EMPEROR, *Princes, Courtiers, moving up and down.*

CHAMBERLAIN (*to* MEPHISTOPHELES).

You still are owing us the phantom-play.
The Emperor grows impatient. Quick, I pray!

MARSHAL.

He asked about it not an hour ago.
You must not keep his Majesty waiting so.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

My comrade is upon this business gone;
He knows the way to set about it;
This very moment, never doubt it,
He's hard at work to push it on.
Shut in his room from vulgar gaze,
No ordinary sleights he tries,
For he that would such peerless beauty raise
Must use the highest art, the magic of the wise.

MARSHAL.

What arts he uses we don't care a pin —
Sir, sir, the Emperor wants you to begin.

BLONDE (*to* MEPHISTOPHELES).

One word, sir! My complexion now is clear,
But in the tiresome summer 'tis not so!
A hundred freckles then from ear to ear,
Quite horrid, tawny things, begin to show.
A remedy!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That such a blonde — 'tis hard! —
Should every May be spotted like the pard!
Take spawn of frogs, and tongues of toads new killed,
At the moon's fullest craftily distilled;
This lotion, when she wanes, apply: the spring
May come, you'll find the spots have taken wing.

BRUNETTE.

You're in request. Here's quite a mob advancing.
Oh, sir, a remedy! A frost-bit foot
Prevents me both from walking and from dancing;
I can't even curtsey gracefully, to boot.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Allow me, child, to press you with my foot!

BRUNETTE.

That's very well 'twixt lovers in their sports.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A vast deal more a tread from me imports.
Like draws to like, as web combines with woof,
Thus foot heals foot, limb limb. Come close! And, mind!
You need not think of answering in kind.

BRUNETTE.

Oh! oh! It burns! 'Twas like a horse's hoof,
It stamped so hard.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You of my cure have proof.
Now you may dance as much as e'er you please,
And your swain's foot beneath the table squeeze.

LADY (*pushing forward*).

Make way for me! Too heavy are my woes.
My inmost heart is racked by maddening throes!
He lived but in my looks till yesterday,
Now he woos her, and turns from me away.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis very sad! But I will set you right.
Up to his side you must contrive to steal.
This charcoal take, and draw it, as you may,
Across his sleeves, cloak, shoulder, and the wight
Shall sweet remorse within his bosom feel.
Then swallow off the charcoal — but no sips
Of water or of wine must cross your lips —
And at your door he sighs this very night.

LADY.

It is not poison?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*offended*).

Honour where 'tis due!
For such charcoal you must go many a mile.
'Twas gathered from a certain funeral pile,
Of which we raked the ashes through and through.

PAGE.

I'm mad in love; they say, I'm not full-grown.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

This sort of thing how am I to endure?
[*To the* PAGE.
The very young ones you must let alone.
You'll find admirers 'mong the more mature.
[*Others press round him.*

Still others coming! Here's a fine to-do!
I must resort to truth, to help me through.
The worst of helps! But no escape I see.
O Mothers, Mothers! set but Faustus free!
[*Looks round.*
Already they are lighting up the hall.
The whole Court is upon the move; and all
The motley stream in graceful order pours
Through far arcades and lengthened corridors.
Now to the old baronial hall they throng,
Scarce holds them all, wide though it be and long.
Its spacious walls are hung with tapestries rich.
And armour old on bracket and in niche.
No need of magic here, or spell, I wis:
Ghosts of themselves must haunt a place like this.

SCENE VII. — *Baronial Hall Dimly Illuminated.*

The EMPEROR *and Court assembled.*

HERALD.

My old vocation, to announce the play,
Is by strange ghostly influence much perplexed;
I can't pretend to make things out, or say,
In such a ravelled business, what comes next.
There stand the couches ready, chairs and all,
The Emperor seated right before the wall;
Upon the tapestry he can behold
At ease the fights of the great times of old.
Round him are lords and gentlefolks reclined,
While common benches throng the space behind;
The lover, too, though ghosts are hovering near,
Has found a pleasant seat beside his dear;
And so, as all are comfortably placed,
The phantoms may appear with all convenient haste!
[*Trumpets.*

ASTROLOGER.

Now to begin the business of the play!
Our liege lord so commands. Ye walls, give way!
The spell and magic work to our desire,
The tapestry fades as 'twere devoured by fire;
The walls divide, and, as they backwards bend,
A stage and ample theatre disclose,
Where we shall be regaled with mystic shows;
And I to the proscenium ascend.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*popping up from the prompter's box*).

My skill, I trust, all here will duly prize;
The devil's rhetoric all in prompting lies.
[*To the* ASTROLOGER.
Thou, who the courses of the stars canst tell,
My whispers wilt interpret passing well.

ASTROLOGER.

By magic sleight, behold before your eyes
In massive bulk an ancient temple rise!
Like Atlas, who erewhile the heavens upbore,
Stand pillars ranged in rows, a goodly store;
Lightly they hold the rocky load in air,
Two shafts like these a structure vast could bear.

ARCHITECT.

That's your antique! I don't admire the style.
'Tis a great, clumsy, overweighted pile.
The rude's called noble, and the unwieldy grand;
Give me small shafts that far in air expand.
The pointed style exalts the soul, and nought
With such instructive influence is fraught.

ASTROLOGER.

The hours the stars concede accept with awe;
Be reason chained by the magician's saw;
But keep your fancy's wing unfettered still,
To roam with noble daring where it will.
Look with your eyes at what you long to see;
It is impossible, and cannot be,
And therefore merits your credulity.
[FAUST *rises at the other side of the proscenium.*
In priestly robes, and wreathed, a wondrous man,
Who now completes what boldly he began!
A tripod rises with him from the ground,
I scent the incense shed its fumes around;
See, he prepares the noble work to bless,
And for our pageant here ensure success!

FAUST (*in a majestic style*).

In your name, Mothers, yours, who have your throne
In the Infinite, and evermore alone,
Yet in communion dwell! The forms of life
Float round you, lifeless, yet with motion rife.
What once has been, in seeming as of yore,
Flits there, for 'twill exist for evermore;
And ye apportion them, ye powers of might,
'Twixt the day's canopy and the vault of night;
Some upon life's glad stream are borne away,
While others bend to the bold wizard's sway,
Who doth to you with hand profuse unfold
What marvels each is yearning to behold!

ASTROLOGER.

Scarce on the dish the golden key he lays,
When the air thickens to a dusky haze;
It coils and curls, now spreads, like clouds, about,
Contracts, expands, divides, shifts in and out.

Phantoms of power, be sure, are stirring there!
Hark! as they move, what music in the air!
With a weird charm the tones aërial thrill,
From every cloud soft melodies distil,
Each pillared shaft, the very triglyph rings,
Yea, I could swear that all the temple sings.
The mists subside, and from the filmy air
Comes graceful forth a youth surpassing fair.
[PARIS *appears*
Mute let me be; what need his name to show?
Paris the Fair, who, who could fail to know?

FIRST LADY.

What youthful fire! What bloom upon his brow!

SECOND LADY.

As fresh and juicy as a peach, I vow!

THIRD LADY.

The finely chiselled, sweetly pouting lip!

FOURTH LADY.

At such a chalice you were fain to sip?

FIFTH LADY.

Handsome, no doubt, but not a noble face!

SIXTH LADY.

He's well enough, but sadly wanting grace.

FIRST KNIGHT.

The shepherd boy, and nothing more, 'tis plain;
Of prince and courtly breeding not a grain.

SECOND KNIGHT.

The lad's half naked, still he has his charms;
To judge, though, we must see him clad in arms.

FIRST LADY.

He sits him down with such a gentle grace.

FIRST KNIGHT.

Were not his breast a dainty resting-place?

ANOTHER LADY.

He bends his arm so prettily o'er his head.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Oh, shocking! Fie! Where was the fellow bred?

FIRST LADY.

You men always find out defective points.

CHAMBERLAIN.

What! In the Emperor's presence, stretch his joints?

FIRST LADY.

It's in the play. He thinks himself alone.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Even in a play good manners should be shown.

FIRST LADY.

Sweet youth! Soft slumber steals his senses o'er.

CHAMBERLAIN.

'Tis perfect! To the life! Is that a snore?

YOUNG LADY (*in raptures*).

What perfume's this, that, with the incense mingling,
Right to the centre of my heart goes tingling?

OLDER LADY.

A breath steals deep into your soul, forsooth!
It comes from him.

OLDEST LADY.

It is the bloom of youth,
A rare ambrosia, bred within the boy,
Which sheds around an atmosphere of joy.

[HELENA *advances.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Soh! such she was! Yet I am fancy-free.
She's pretty, hum! but not the style for me.

ASTROLOGER.

My task is ended. Frankly I avow
What well I feel, my task is ended now.
She comes, the ideal Fair, and though a tongue
Of fire were mine, of yore her charms were sung.
Who sees her, thenceforth is her slave confessed,
Who should possess her were too highly blessed.

FAUST.

Have I still eyes? I see, in trancèd thought,
Fair Beauty's fountain welling like a sea.
My voyage dread a glorious gain hath brought;
How blank, how dreary was the world to me!
And since my priesthood what hath it become?
Fleeting no more, nor void and wearisome!
May palsy's blight my every sense benumb,

If e'er I long for other love than thine!
The gracious form for which of old I panted,
Which in the magic glass my soul enchanted,
Was but a phantom of thy charms divine!
For thee, for thee, I would expend my whole
Pent passion's force, my energies of soul,
The love, devotion, madness of my heart!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Be calm, be calm, and don't forget your part!

ELDERLY LADY.

Tall, well-proportioned, but her head's too small.

YOUNG LADY.

Look at her foot! that's clumsiest of all!

DIPLOMATIST.

Princesses just like this I've seen and know,
Methinks she's beautiful from top to toe!

COURTIER.

Now to the sleeper softly doth she glide.

FIRST LADY.

He young and pure — she's hideous by his side!

POET.

Her beauty seems to bathe his form in light.

SECOND LADY.

Endymion and Luna, pictured quite.

POET.

Yes! As from heaven she comes, the goddess pale,
O'er him she bends, his breathing to inhale;
O happy boy! A kiss! Oh, bliss untold!

DUENNA.

Before us all! 'Tis really too bold!

FAUST.

Oh! dreadful boon for one so young!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Be still!
Let the fair phantom do whate'er it will!

COURTIER.

She glides away on tiptoe; does he wake?

FIRST LADY.

She looks behind; I thought she would, the snake!

COURTIER.

He starts! He's lost in wonder and amaze!

FIRST LADY.

No wonder 'tis to her, that fills her gaze!

COURTIER.

She turns to greet him with enchanting grace.

FIRST LADY.

She teaches him his lesson, what and how.
All men are stupid dolts in such a case.
He thinks, no doubt, she never loved till now.

KNIGHT.

She's perfect! So majestic, form and face.

FIRST LADY.

The wanton minx! Her conduct's a disgrace!

PAGE.

I would give worlds to occupy his place!

COURTIER.

In such a coil who'd not be netted fast?

FIRST LADY.

The jewel through so many hands has passed,
'Tis grown a trifle shabby in the setting.

ANOTHER LADY.

What wonder, after these ten years of fretting?

KNIGHT.

Each to his taste! But, have it if I might,
This lovely ruin would content me quite.

LITERATUS.

I see her plainly, yet I don't feel clear
That we have got the real Helen here.
Our eyes are apt to carry us astray;
To trust to what is written is my way.
There, then, I read, that she enchanted all
Troy's graybeards as she stood upon the wall;
And that is just, methinks, what here I see:
I am not young, and she enchanteth me.

ASTROLOGER.

A boy no more, he clasps her with a bound!
In vain she strives his ecstasy to school.
With stalwart arm he lifts her from the ground,
And now he bears her off.

FAUST.

Audacious fool!
Thou darest? What? Not hear me? Hold, I say!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

It is yourself who make this phantom play!

ASTROLOGER.

A word, one only! After this, we may
This pageant call — "The Rape of Helena."

FAUST.

The Rape! Do I then count for nothing here?
This key, do I not hold it in my hand?
It was my guide through the wide ocean drear
Of the dread Solitudes to solid land.
Here is firm footing! here Realities!
Here spirit may with spirits cope at ease,
And give the mighty phantom-world command.
And she who dwelt afar in grace divine,
How can she e'er be nearer to my hand?
I'll rescue her, then is she doubly mine.
The venture shall be made. Ye Mothers! ye
Must compass it! I charge ye, aid me! He,
Who her unmatched perfection once has known,
Must die, or win and wear it for his own.

ASTROLOGER.

Hold, Faustus, hold! He clasps her in his arm.
A cloudy trouble gathers o'er her form.
The key, he points it to the youth, and lo!
He touches him. We're all undone. Woe, woe!
[*Explosion.* FAUST *is dashed to the ground. The phantoms melt into air.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*takes* FAUST *upon his shoulders*).

You've caught it now! With fools his lot to cast,
To trouble brings the devil's self at last!
[*Darkness. Tumult.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A highly arched, narrow Gothic Chamber, formerly* FAUST'S; *unaltered.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*stepping out from behind a curtain. As he lifts it up and looks back,* FAUST *is seen stretched out upon an old-fashioned bed*).

Lie there, poor wretch! Yours is a crisis
Will last you for awhile, be sure!
The man whom Helen paralyses
Takes many a long day to cure. [*Looks round.*
Where'er I look, amid the glimmer,
There's nothing changed the very least.
The stained-glass panes, methinks, are rather dimmer,
The cobwebs round the room somewhat increased.
The ink's dried up; the paper yellow. There
Stands everything just where it did — yes, all!
There lies the very pen, too, I declare,
Faust to the devil signed himself withal.
And of his blood a tiny droplet still

Lingers within the hollow of the quill.
The very greatest of collectors might
In so unique a specimen delight.
Ha! On the old hook, too, the old furred cloak!
Of the old time it 'minds me, when, in joke,
Of solemn saws I gave the boy his fill,
At which the youth, perhaps, is mumbling still.
Warm, cosy robe, I feel as then,
And long to get inside of you,
And play the teacher once again,
As everybody thinks he's fit to do.
How to accomplish it your scholars know;
The devil lost the trick long, long ago.
[*Takes down the furred pelisse; crickets, moths, and chafers fly out from it.*

CHORUS OF INSECTS.

We welcome thy coming,
Old patron and friend;
With buzz and with humming
On thee we attend.
Singly, in silence,
Thou plantedst us here,
Skipping by thousands,
Behold, we appear!
The rogue in the bosom
Hides close in his lair;
Our fur-bed we gladly
Forsake for the air.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis quite a treat to hear these young fry cheep!
Let one but sow, in time he's sure to reap.
Again I shake the old tag-rag, and out
The creatures fly and flutter all about.

Up and away! In nooks on every side,
My little darlings, quickly hide.
In yon old boxes, chests, and bins,
Here in these yellow parchment skins,
In dusty pots, retorts, and bowls,
In yonder skulls' grim eyelet-holes.
Enjoy yourselves you surely must,
Among such maggots, dirt, and dust.
[*Slips into the pelisse.*
Come! and once more my back array!
I'm Principal again to-day:
But what avails to bear the name!
Where are the people, to admit my claim?
[*Pulls the bell, which emits a shrill, penetrating sound, at which the halls shake and the doors burst open.*

FAMULUS (*stumbling along the dark passage*).

What a clamour! what a quaking!
Walls and staircase rocking, shaking!
Ugh! the lightning, how it flashes
Through the coloured window-sashes!
From the ceiling, fast and faster,
Rattle stucco, lath, and plaster;
And, by wizard cantrip parted,
From the doors the bolts have started!
Yonder — horrors ne'er will cease! —
A giant in Faust's old pelisse!
He so stares and nods at me,
I shall drop down presently.
Shall I fly, or shall I stay?
I'm undone! Oh! well-a-day!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Come hither, friend! Your name is Nicodemus.

FAMULUS.

Most worthy sir, that is my name. Oremus!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Some other time!

FAMULUS.

You know me, it appears!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Right well! A student still, though up in years!
Well, well, the learnedest, my moss-grown friend,
Can't choose but go on studying to the end.
A card-house so he builds him, small and neat;
But not even greatest minds their house complete.
Your master, though, he has indeed a name;
Who has not heard of Dr. Wagner's fame?
Wagner, the learned world's acknowledged head,
Which, but for him, indeed, might go to bed!
Daily from him new flashes burst
Of wisdom, science, and of knowledge,
And pupils, in and out of college,
For pure omniscience athirst,
In crowds surround this wondrous teacher.
He is your only brilliant preacher;
He like Saint Peter wields the keys,
And opens Hell's or Heaven's gates at his ease.
All other doctors' fame has faded
Before the brilliancy of his;
Even Faustus' name is overshaded;
The great inventor he, he only, is.

FAMULUS.

Fair sir, forgive me, if I may
Your dictum venture to gainsay;

Trust me, 'tis quite the other way.
The doctor would such praises spurn,
For he is modest to a flaw;
To Faustus he looks up with awe,
And may indeed be said to burn
For that distinguished man's return,
Whose absence, ever since he went,
Has caused him sore bewilderment.
This room, and everything that's in it,
Awaits its former master, just
As when he left it, even the dust.
I scarcely dare set foot within it.
What must the astral hour be — what?
The walls, methinks, have somehow parted,
The doorposts sprung, the ringbolts started,
Else in here you had never got.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well, then, your master, where is he?
Bring me to him, or him to me.

FAMULUS.

His order's strict, to let none enter;
I scarcely know if I may venture.
On his stupendous task intent,
For months on months he has been pent
Within his room, in strict seclusion,
And will not brook the least intrusion.
The meekest of all learned men,
He looks like demon in his den,
Begrimed from ears to nose, his eyes
With blowing up the furnace red;
So day and night his tongs he plies,
And never thinks to go to bed.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Refuse to me admittance? Why,
The very man his ends to forward, I.

[*Exit* FAMULUS. MEPHISTOPHELES *sits down with a very solemn air.*

Scarce seated at my post, when — hark! oh, rare!
A visitor comes clattering up the stair;
But this time he is of the latest school;
Not to be bound by dogma or by rule.

BACCALAUREUS (*swaggering along the passage*).

Gate and doors wide open cast!
Good! So we may hope at last
That the living man no more
Grubs in dust, as heretofore,
Like a dead man — moping, sighing,
And, though living, truly dying.

This old fabric, roof and wall,
Bends and totters to its fall;
Scarce if soon we do not make us,
Crash and wreck will overtake us;
I, though not a man to flinch,
Go no farther, not an inch.

Was it not here? It was, I know,
That I, so many years ago,
A freshman came, in deep concern,
And full of foolish fears, to learn;
And in these graybeards did confide,
By their cold morsels edified.
Out of their musty volumes old
All sorts of lies they did unfold;
Believing not the things they knew,
Wasting their own lives, and mine too.

How? In yon cell there's one, I'm sure,
Still sitting in the clear-obscure!

How odd! Yes, in the very gown,
Turned up with fur of dingy brown!
In look or garb no sort of change!
Just as I left him. This is strange!
Then with an awe profound I scanned him,
Because I did not understand him;
To-day he'll find I'm up to trap.
Here goes! So now look out, old chap!
[*To* MEPHISTOPHELES.
Old gentleman, if Lethe's muddy tide
Have not o'erflowed your bald skew-dropping pate,
Here an old scholar see with grateful pride,
From academic thrall emancipate.
You are the same as then in every feature,
But I am quite another creature.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I'm glad you've answered to my bell!
Even then your merits I could see;
As in the chrysalis one can foretell
The brilliant butterfly to be.
In collar laced, and curls well dressed,
You then felt quite a childish zest.
You never wore a pigtail, eh?
A crop, I see, you wear to-day.
You have a bold and dashing air,
Pray, don't too hard upon me bear!

BACCALAUREUS.

Old gentleman, this place may be the same,
But things have not been at a stop,
So your ambiguous phrases drop:
We're fly to all that sort of game.

You once could trot the simple youth;
It needed no great skill, to do
What now would puzzle more than you.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

If to the young one speaks unvarnished truth,
Their yellow beaks the precious food eschew;
But when, in course of time and tide,
They've learned it dearly through their hide,
They fancy, then, they found it out at once,
And so exclaim, "Our master was a dunce!"

BACCALAUREUS.

A knave, perhaps! For which of them has grace
To speak the plain truth plumply to our face?
They treat us like good children — here caress,
There threaten, letting out now more, now less.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

There is a time to learn; but, by your speech,
You are, I see, yourself prepared to teach.
Through many moons, and suns some few,
Profound experience, doubtless, has been gained by you.

BACCALAUREUS.

Experience! Psha! Mere dust and scum!
Mind, mind's the thing! Mind free and growing!
Of what man's always known the sum
Is not, confess it, worth the knowing.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*after a pause*).

I've long surmised I was a fool. Alas!
It strikes me now I am an utter ass.

BACCALAUREUS.

Delightful! There's some reason in you yet!
The first old man of sense I ever met!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I sought for hidden golden store, and lit
On merest cinder-rubbish everywhere.

BACCALAUREUS.

Your bald old pate is not, you'd best admit,
Worth more than yonder hollow skulls up there.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*good-humouredly*).

How rude you are, you're not aware, friend, quite.

BACCALAUREUS.

In German one must lie, to be polite.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*who has been throughout the dialogue rolling his chair nearer the proscenium — to the pit*).

I'm choked up here! Nor air nor light I've got.
You'll find me quarters 'mongst you, will you not?

BACCALAUREUS.

It's quite preposterous, that men will try
To cut a figure when their day's gone by.
Man's life lives in his blood; and where, forsooth,
Does blood so course and pulsate as in youth?
That's the true thing, with glow and vigour rife,
Which out of its own life creates new life.
There all is stir, there something's done and sped;
The weak fall out, the stalwart go ahead.
Whilst we have made one-half the world our own,
What have you done? Why, napped and mused alone,

Dreamed, pondered, planned, still planned, and that is all!
Old age a shivering ague is — no more! —
Of whims and frosty fancies bred;
When once his thirtieth year is o'er,
A man is just as good as dead.
'Twere best yourself betimes to slay.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The Devil here has nothing more to say.

BACCALAUREUS.

Save through my will, no Devil can exist.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

The Devil, though, some day your neck shall twist.

BACCALAUREUS.

This is youth's noblest calling and most fit!
The world was not, till I created it.
Out of the ocean I evoked the sun,
With me the moon began its course to run,
To light my path the day its splendour wore,
For me the earth her flowers and verdure bore.
At my command, on yonder primal night,
Did all the stars pour forth their glorious light.
Who but myself for you deliverance wrought
From the harsh fetters of pedantic thought?
I with free soul, ecstatical and bright,
Walk in the radiance of my inward light,
With fearless step and joy-illumined mind.
Before me brightness, darkness far behind. [*Exit.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well, go in pride, original, thy ways!
Insight would make thee melancholy:

What thought of wisdom or of folly
Has not been often thought in bygone days?
Yet in good time all will come safely round —
A few more years, this folly will have passed;
Even where the must ferments beyond all bound,
It yields a wine of some kind at the last.
[*To the younger occupants of the pit, who do not applaud.*
You to my words are deaf and cold.
Well, well! Good boys like you in time will mend 'em.
Reflect! the Devil, he is old;
Then grow you old, to comprehend him!

SCENE II. — *Laboratory, after the fashion of the middle ages; a quantity of useless apparatus, for fantastic purposes.*

WAGNER (*at the furnace*).

The bell rings; at its clangour drear
The mouldy walls with horror thrill;
This dread suspense of hope and fear
Must soon be solved, for good or ill.
Joy, joy! The gloom begins to clear!
Now is the phial's core below
As with a living coal aglow;
Yea, like a fine carbuncle, mark,
It flashes lightnings through the dark!
And now a light, pellucid, white!
Oh, let me, let me fail no more!
Great heavens! a rustling at the door?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*entering*).

Pray, don't alarm yourself! all's right.

WAGNER (*anxiously*).

Welcome! The stars my purpose aid!
[*In a low voice.*
But not a word. Breathe lightly, for a grand
Conception's consummation is at hand.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*in a whisper*).

What is afoot?

WAGNER (*also in a whisper*).

A man is being made.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A man! What pair of amorous tools
In the alembic there are sweating?

WAGNER.

Nay, heaven forfend! 'Tis only fit for fools,
That ancient method of begetting.
The tender point, which was life's source,
That subtle, springing, inward force,
Which, to impress its image bent,
Did something take, and something lent,
And to its ends essayed to win
Both what was foreign, what akin,
Is now from its high honours thrust.
If brutes this way still sate their lust,
Man, with his mighty gifts, henceforth, I wis,
Must have a source more high, more pure than this.
[*Turns to the furnace.*
It flashes! Look! My hopes were not unfounded.
I knew, and now the proof behold,
That when, from substance hundredfold,
From every source and quarter singled,

And all — for there's the art, I hold —
In suitable proportion mingled,
Man's substance we had thus compounded,
And in alembic then confounded,
In proper combination, we
The work in silence perfected should see.
[*Again turns to the furnace.*
Yes, yes! Behold! the mass grows clearer.
The demonstration nearer, nearer!
What men call Nature's mystery, we dare
By mind to probe and analyse,
And what she organised whilere,
We now contrive to crystallise.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

He that lives long learns much, as time goes by;
The world can nothing new before him set.
Already in my early travels I
Of mortals crystallised not few have met.

WAGNER (*who has meanwhile been watching the phial intently*).

It flashes, mounts, the atoms blend!
One moment, and we reach the end!
A grand design mere madness seems at first;
But in the end with us will be the laughter,
And thus a brain, which living thought has nursed,
Shall breed a living thinker too, hereafter.
[*Contemplates the phial with rapture.*
The glass rings piercingly and sweet.
It clouds, it clears! All, all, as it should be!
Settling into proportion meet,
A comely mannikin I see.
More can the world or can I wish for? No!
The mystery lies unveiled within our reach;

Just mark that sound, and you will find it grow
To perfect voice, to most articulate speech.

HOMUNCULUS (*in the phial, to* WAGNER).

How goes it, daddie mine! It was no jest.
Come, press me very gently to your breast.
But not too hard, else will the crystal shatter.
Remember, 'tis the law of matter,
That all the universe doth scarce suffice
For Nature's procreations grand,
While things produced by Art's device
A bounded space and well enclosed demand.
[*To* MEPHISTOPHELES
Ha, rogue! That's you, sir kinsman, is it?
Thanks, thanks! Most aptly have you timed your visit.
Rare chance for us that brought you here! And I,
Whilst I exist, my task must briskly ply.
I long to tackle to my work, and you
Are just the man to show me what to do.

WAGNER.

One word, just one, to screen my credit, pray,
And save my reputation many a slight!
With problems I am pelted every day,
By young and old, which baffle me outright.
For instance, nobody can comprehend
How body and soul so exquisitely blend,
Sticking as close as though they ne'er would part,
Yet every day embroiled in conflict tart.
Then —

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Stop! Ask rather, how it comes about
That man and wife so constantly fall out?

Such problems, friend, you never will see through.
The little one wants work; here's work to do.

HOMUNCULUS.

What's to be done?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*pointing to a side-door*).

Yonder thy gifts employ!

WAGNER (*still gazing into the phial*).

In sooth, thou art a darling of a boy!

[*The side-door opens.* FAUST *is seen lying upon the couch.*

HOMUNCULUS (*amazed*).

Strange!

[*The phial bounds out of* WAGNER'S *hands, hovers over* FAUST, *and sheds a light upon him.*

What a gorgeous garniture of dream!
Deep in the umbrage of a wood, a stream
Lucent as crystal — women, oh, how fair!
Their limbs unrobing in the sunlit air;
And one, who o'er them all asserts her place,
Supreme in beauty, and supreme in grace,
Sprung of heroic, yea, Olympian race!
She dips her foot in the transparent tide,
Cooling the glow of her majestic frame
In waves that leap and sparkle up her side,
In loving dalliance with the fragrant flame.
But hark! a rushing as of wings in flight!
What plash and plunging mar the mirror bright!
Her maidens fly in terror: she, their queen,
Gazes around her, smiling and serene,
And with a thrill of pride and pleasure sees
The foremost swan come fondling to her knees,
Importunate, yet gentle. Now, at ease,

With the coy beauty he disports and plays.
But lo! at once a mist begins to rise,
And veils in an impenetrable haze
The loveliest of all visions from my eyes.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A very exquisite romance, I vow;
Small though thou art, a mighty phantast thou.
I can see nothing.

HOMUNCULUS.

I believe it. How
Should you, a creature of the northern clime,
Bred 'mid the frippery of priests and knights,
Have your eyes open to such glorious sights?
You never are at home but where
Darkness and gloom infect the air. [*Looking round.*
Gray stone walls, moss-grown, ugly, groins,
High-pointed arches, volutes, coigns!
If here he wake, 'twill ruin all,
Dead on the spot he'd surely fall!
Swans, naked beauties, woodland, stream,
These made up his prophetic dream.
How should he ever reconcile
Himself to breathe in den so vile?
Though little caring where I be,
I find it rather much for me.
So hence with him!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Your wish shall be obeyed.

HOMUNCULUS.

Command the warrior to the fight,
To dance and roundel lead the maid,

And then their joy is at its height.
This is — ha, ha! the thought is bright —
The Classical Walpurgis Night.
The very thing to nurse his bent!
He'll there be in his element.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Of such a think I never heard.

HOMUNCULUS.

Oh! good!
And was it probable you should?
You only know romantic spectres; but
The genuine spectre's of a classic cut.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

In what direction shall we ride?
Antique companions, mind, I can't abide.

HOMUNCULUS.

Your pleasure-grounds north-westward, Satan, lie,
But south and eastward we to-night must hie.
O'er a broad flat doth fair Peneios wind,
By many an oozy bay, green woodlands through:
The mountain cliffs close in the plain behind,
And far up lies Pharsalus old and new.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Out and away! No longer let me hear
Of slaves and tyrants waging conflict drear!
They bore me; for one war is scarcely done,
When out of hand another is begun;
And not a man of them can see that they
Only the game of Asmodeus play.

For Freedom's rights they battle, that's the cry;
Slaves murder slaves, were nearer truth, say I.

HOMUNCULUS.

Oh, to their strife and wrangling leave mankind.
Each must protect himself as best he can,
From boyhood up; so grows at last a man.
The cure for him (*pointing to* FAUST) is what we have to find.
If you've a panacea, prove it now;
If not, give way, and leave the task to me.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The bolts of heathendom, I must avow,
Defy my brocken spells to find the key.
These Greeks were never good for much. Yet stay!
They charm men's senses with external show.
Their sins look bright, and beautiful, and gay;
While ours seem always dreary, dull, and slow.
And now what else?

HOMUNCULUS.

You used not to be shy.
I think I've something I can tempt you by.
What say you to Thessalian witches, eh?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*kindling up*).

Thessalian witches? Good! A gentry these
I've been inquiring for this many a day.
I have a notion, though, that they
My taste will not exactly please, —
Night after night, at least, with them to stay.
But we shall see. Away!

HOMUNCULUS.

The cloak once more!
And in it wrap yon sleeping cavalier!
'Twill bear you both, as it has done before.
I go ahead, you by my light to steer.

WAGNER (*alarmed*).

And I?

HOMUNCULUS.

Why, you — stay here at home, and those
Researches most momentous close!
Turn your old parchments o'er and o'er, — collect
The elements of life, as they direct,
Then piece them warily; and, look ye now,
Consider well the WHAT, but more the HOW
I o'er a slice of earth the while will hie,
And should I find the dot upon the I,
Why, this your mighty enterprise will cap.
The prize is more than worth the effort — wealth,
Honour, renown, long life, unfailing health,
Knowledge withal, and virtue too, — mayhap.
Farewell!

WAGNER.

Farewell! My heart is sad and sore,
For much I fear I ne'er shall see thee more.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Now for Peneios! My small friend,
I'm not ashamed to claim his aid. [*Ad spectatores*
We in the long run all depend
Upon the creatures we have made.

CLASSICAL WALPURGIS NIGHT.

SCENE III. — *Pharsalian Fields — Darkness.*

ERICHTHO.

To this night's ghastly revel, as full oft before,
I hither come, Erichtho I, the sad of mien,
Yet not so loathly, as with calumny's gross tongue
The libellous poets paint me. They, in praise or blame
No stint nor measure know. The vale through all its length
Is white as with a sea of tents, all ashy gray,
An after-reflex of that awful, ghastly night.
How oft already has it been repeated! 'Twill
Be through all time repeated! Empire no one yields
To another; no, not even to him by whom 'twas won
By force, by force is swayed. For who, though powerless
To rule his inner self, is not intent to rule
His neighbour's will, at the proud dictates of his own?
But here a signal proof to bitter end was fought,
How power arrays itself against a mightier power;
Rends freedom's chaplet fair, with all its thousand flowers,
And stubborn laurels round the victor's brows entwines.
Here Magnus of the days of his first greatness dreamed.
There Cæsar watched the wavering balance shake.
Here shall they grapple! Well the world the victor knows.
With tongues of ruddy flame the watch-fires glow, the ground
A semblance of the blood, that dyed it erst, exhales,
And, by the night's most strange and weird-like sheen allured,

The beings of Hellenic legend 'gin to throng.
The fabled forms of ancient days unstably flit
Around the fires, or sit in circles at their ease.
The moon, though only half her orb, resplendent, clear,
Climbs up the sky, and fills the vale with mellow light.
The phantom tents fade out, and bluely burn the fires.
But lo! what meteor strange comes sailing through the air!
Itself illumed, a ball corporeal it illumes.
I scent life near at hand. Destructive as I am
To all that lives, 'twill not beseem me to remain;
'Twould bring me ill repute, advantage none at all.
Now it descends to earth! 'Tis best that I retire.

[*Withdraws.*

The Aerial Travellers above.

HOMUNCULUS.

Hover, hover, in the air,
O'er these flames and phantoms dreary;
Down within the valley there,
Things look spectral, wild, and eerie.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

As a-north, through casements old
Ghastly shapes and horrors rare,
Hideous ghosts I now behold;
Here I'll be at home, as there!

HOMUNCULUS.

See yon figure, long and gaunt,
Swift away before us gliding!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

She looks troubled, to her haunt
Through the air to see us sliding.

HOMUNCULUS.

Let her go! Set down thy freight,
That paladin of dreams unstable,
And life will come back to him straight;
He seeks it in the realm of fable.

FAUST (*as he touches the ground*).

Where is she?

HOMUNCULUS.

Cannot say, good sir;
But here you may get news of her.
From fire to fire till dawn do you
Unceasingly your quest pursue.
Should anything his courage daunt,
Who dared invade The Mothers' haunt?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I, too, have here a part to play;
And there can be no better way
Than for us each to seek his own
Adventures 'mongst these fires alone.
And thou, small friend, to reunite us,
Shalt ring, and with thy radiance light us.

HOMUNCULUS.

Thus shall I blaze, thus ring for you!
[*The glass booms and flashes vehemently.*
Now, haste away to marvels new!

FAUST (*alone*).

Where is she? Wherefore now inquire?
If this were not the land that bore her,
These not the waves that paddled o'er her,
This is, at least, the air that did her speech inspire.

Here! here in Greece! Here, by a marvel swept,
I knew at once the soil on which I stood:
A spirit fired my life-blood as I slept;
Antæus-like I feel a giant's mood,
And though my path be thronged with visions dire,
I will explore this labyrinth of fire. [*Goes off.*

SCENE IV. — *On the Upper Peneios.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*peering about*).

As in and out among these flames I flirt,
I'm quite put out, for almost all I view
Is naked, only here and there a shirt;
The Sphinxes lost to shame, the Griffins too,
And all those long-tressed things of wingèd kind,
Bare to the eye in front, and bare behind.
We relish rarely what is gross and free,
But, really, the antique's too lively even for me.
On it we must our modern views impress,
And clothe it in the latest style of dress.
A hideous crew! Yet must I not neglect
To greet them, as a stranger, with respect.
Hail, lovely females — hail, ye grizzled sages!

GRIFFIN (*snarling*).

Not grizzled! Griffins! No one likes to hear
Himself called grizzled. Every word betrays
Its lineage by the sound which it conveys.
Gray, grewsome, grizzled, graves, grim, grizzly, all
Of the same root etymological,
Grate on our ears.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And yet it cannot be,
That in the Griffin you dislike the Gri?

GRIFFIN.

Of course not! Kindred as it is with what,
If sometimes censured, oftener praise has got:
A man should grasp at Beauty, Empire, Gold,
Fortune the grasping favours and the bold.

ANTS (*of colossal size*).

You speak of gold; we had collected heaps,
And stored them close in caves and rocky keeps;
The Arimaspians, they found out the place,
Hid all away, and mock us to our face.

GRIFFIN.

We'll force them to acknowledge where it lies.

ARIMASPIAN.

Not on this night of jubilee.
Until to-morrow all are free.
This time we're certain of our prize.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*has stationed himself between the Sphinxes*).

Quite comfortable here I feel,
For you I comprehend and know.

SPHINX.

Then what our spirit-tones reveal
Clothe thou with shape, if this be so.
That we may know thee, let thy name be told.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The names men call me by are manifold.
Say, are there any Britons here?

They're always roaming far and near,
To spy out battle-fields, old crumbling walls,
Drear spots of classic fame, rocks, waterfalls.
Meet goal were this for them! And they,
If here, would testify, in the old play
They talked of me as Old Iniquity.

SPHINX.

And why?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That's just what puzzles me.

SPHINX.

Perhaps! perhaps! Canst read the starry book?
What say'st thou to its aspect, then, to-night?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Star courses star, the shaven moon shines bright,
And I'm delighted with this cosy nook,
And warm me rarely 'gainst thy lion's skin.
To go up higher were a loss to win.
Come now, enigmas or charades propound.

SPHINX.

Propound thyself; enigma more profound
Than thou 'twere scarcely possible to start.
So, then, essay to fathom what thou art.
" What to the pious and the heedful,
Or wicked man alike is needful,
To that a butt, to try his foil on,
To this a chum, to folly to beguile on,
And every way a thing for Zeus to smile on?"

FIRST GRIFFIN (*snarling*).

I can't abide him.

SECOND GRIFFIN (*snarling more vehemently*).

What does he want here?

BOTH.

Such scum why should we suffer near?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You think, perhaps, my nails are not a match
For your sharp talons, should we come to scratch.
Try, then, just try!

SPHINX (*mildly*).

Remain, if you desire;
Ere long you will be anxious to retire.
At home you can do anything you please:
Here, if I err not, you are ill at ease.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Above, no daintier bit of flesh I know,
But, ugh! I shudder at the beast below.

SPHINX.

False churl, beware, or dearly shall ye rue:
These claws of ours are sharp and fell!
Lord of the shrunken hoof, no place for you
Our circle holds, and that ye know full well.

[*Sirens preludise above*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What birds are these on yonder bough,
Among the river-willows there?

SPHINX.

The best have fallen a prey, ere now,
To such sing-song, so thou beware!

SIRENS.

Ah, why wilt thou linger long
'Midst the wondrous, the unsightly?
Hark, we come, a chorus sprightly,
Carolling melodious song,
As beseems the siren throng!

SPHINX (*mocking them in the same melody*).

Force them to come down, for they
Hide among the leafy spray
Their long talons, hooked and hideous,
Which on thee will fall perfidious,
Shouldst thou listen to their lay.

SIRENS.

Hatred, envy, hence take wing!
We the purest pleasures bring,
Which beneath the welkin be.
Best of water, best of earth,
Shapes of beauty, shapes of mirth,
Shall combine to welcome thee.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These are the new vagaries fine,
Where note round note is made to twine
From throat or strings with curious art.
On me the caterwauling's lost;
It titillates my ears at most,
But fails to penetrate the heart.

SPHINX.

Speak not of heart! What heart hast thou?
A shrivelled leathern flask, I vow,
For face like thine were heart enow.

FAUST (*enters*).

How wondrous! yet how fine! Where'er I gaze,
Even in the loathly, grand impressive traits!
There's something tells me, this way fortune lies;
Where do they bear me, these calm earnest eyes?
[*Indicating the Sphinxes.*
Ha! Before such stood Œdipus of yore.
[*Indicating the Sirens.*
Even such Ulysses crouched in hempen cords before.
[*Indicating the Ants.*
By such, a priceless treasure was amassed.
[*Indicating the Griffins.*
By these 'twas guarded safely to the last.
With new-born life I feel my soul expand.
Grand are the forms, the recollections grand.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Time was, you would have banned these creatures here,
But now, it seems, to them you're well inclined;
For where a man is hunting for his dear,
Monsters themselves a ready welcome find.

FAUST (*to the Sphinxes*).

Ye female forms must answer me! Who e'er
Among you hath seen Helena the Fair?

SPHINX.

Not to her age did we pertain.
The last of us by Hercules was slain.
From Chiron thou mayst tidings gain.

He will be roaming hereabout to-night.
Much mayst thou hope, if thou canst stay his flight.

SIRENS.

Thou, too, shouldst not lack for glory. . . .
As Ulysses stayed beside us,
Neither mocked us, nor defied us,
Much he learned for after-story.
Come unto the bright green sea,
Come and dwell with us, and we,
All we know will tell to thee.

SPHINX.

Noble child of earth, away!
Heed not their delusive lay.
Let our counsels bind thee fast
As Ulysses to the mast.
Find great Chiron, he will show
All thy heart desires to know. [FAUST *retires.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*peevishly*).

What are these unsightly things?
How they croak and flap their wings!
Scarce visible, so swift they go,
And one by one, all in a row.
They would tire a sportsman, these.

SPHINX.

Like the wintry storm-blast flying,
Alcides' shafts almost defying,
These are the fleet Stymphalides;
Though in hoarsest croakings sent,
Yet their greeting's kindly meant:
With their vulture beaks, and feet
Webbed like geese, they fain would win

Footing here in our rètreat,
As being to ourselves akin.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*scared*).

More monsters still among them hiss and play!

SPHINX.

These are the heads, — nay, dread no ill! —
Of the Lernean snake, that think they're something still,
Though from the trunk dissevered many a day.
But what's the matter with you, say?
You look uneasy, twist awry.
Where would you wish to go? Away!
Yon group, I see, has caught your eye.
Do not constrain yourself to stay.
Be gone to them! You'll stumble there
On many a visage passing fair.
They are the Lamiæ, wantons rare,
With smiling lips and foreheads bold,
Revel with satyrs fit to hold;
With them what may not Goatfoot dare?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You'll stay, then, here or hereabout,
That I again may find you out?

SPHINX.

Go, mingle with the revel rout!
Long has our native Egypt known
Our kith and kindred keep their throne
Thousands of years; we shall not weary soon.
Ours is no fickle fleeting state;
Moveless ourselves, we regulate
The periods of the sun and moon.

Before the Pyramids we sit:
The nations dree their doom before us —
War, peace, or deluge — and no whit
Of change or turning passes o'er us.

SCENE V. — *On the Lower Peneios.*

PENEIOS (*surrounded by streams and Nymphs*).

Stir, ye sedges, swaying slowly;
Breathe, ye tangled rushes, lowly;
Wave, ye willows, softly sighing,
To the aspens' thrill replying,
'Midst the pauses of my dreams!
But a thund'rous murmur dread
Scares me from my slumb'rous bed
'Neath the ever-flowing streams.

FAUST (*advancing to the stream*).

Hear I rightly, then I ween
In behind the leafy screen
Of these woven boughs are noises,
Like the sound of human voices.
Yea, each wavelet seems to be
Brattling, prattling, merrily.

NYMPHS (*to* FAUST).

Lay thee down lowly,
Thy joy will be full!
Rest thy o'erwearied
Limbs in the cool.
The peace shall come o'er thee
That evermore flees thee;
We'll lisp, or we'll whisper,
Or murmur to please thee.

FAUST.

I wake indeed! I see them well,
These forms of grace unmatchable,
In beauty palpable to sight!
What transports strange my spirit seize!
Can these be dreams, or memories,
The shadows of an old delight?
The limpid waters, as they stray
Through bushes green, that gently sway
Above them, scarce a murmur make;
An hundred rills together meet
In one broad, clear, unruffled sheet
Of waters deep — a crystal lake:
Young female forms, plump, debonair,
That fill the eye with rapture, there
Are in the liquid mirror glassed!
In merry groups to bathe they come,
Some stoutly swim, wade shyly some,
Shout, splash in sportive fray at last.
Could these content, mine eye should find
Enjoyment here; but no, my mind
Looks farther, and with vision keen
Would pierce yon thick embowering roof
Of clustering leaves, whose tangled woof
Conceals the glory of their queen.

Oh, wonderful! Swans bright of hue,
From leaf-screened nooks swim into view
With slow majestic pace,
All side by side serenely steering,
Their neck and crest right proudly rearing,
As conscious of their grace.
Yet one that breasts the glassy tide,
Outstripping all, a statelier pride
And bearing seems to vaunt:

With pinions all blown proudly out,
He cleaves the waves that curl about,
And nears the sacred haunt.
The rest glide softly to and fro,
With feathers smooth and white as snow;
But lo! their crests in wrath they set,
And put to flight the fearful maids,
Who, seeking safety in the glades,
Their mistress-queen forget.

NYMPHS.

Sisters, sisters, lay your ear
To the shore's green brink, and say,
If, like me, the beats you hear
Of horses' hooves that come this way.
Much I marvel, who to-night
Message bears in stormy flight!

FAUST.

The earth rings with a hollow sound,
As from a flying courser's bound!
There, there, see there!
Should fate so rare
Be mine, then, then would all be well,
Oh, marvel without parallel!
A horseman on a snowy steed,—
High mettle in his looks I read,—
Comes trampling on and on to me.
I do not err — 'tis he, the son
Of Philyra, the far-famed one!
Stop, Chiron, stop! I'd speak with thee.

CHIRON.

How now? What wouldst thou?

FAUST.

Pause, I prithee.

CHIRON.

I may not rest.

FAUST.

Then take me with thee!

CHIRON.

Mount! And I then may question thee at will.
Whither wouldst go? Thou stand'st here on the banks —
Wouldst cross the stream? I'll take thee. Pausing still?

FAUST (*mounting*).

Where'er thou wilt — and win my endless thanks.
The great man thou, the teacher rich in glory,
Who reared a race of heroes high and bold,
Those gallant Argonauts renowned in story,
And all who made the poet's world of old.

CHIRON.

Best speak no more of that! E'en Pallas hath
Not always honour as a Mentor gained;
Men will be men, and hold their wayward path,
Do what we will, as though they'd ne'er been trained.

FAUST.

The leech who gives a name to every plant,
Knows every root, its virtue, and its haunt,
Has balm for every wound, and physic for each pain,
With mind and body's force here to my heart I strain.

CHIRON.

Were hero striken down, I still could find
All needful aid and skill his hurt requires,
But I my leechcraft long long since resigned
To simple-culling beldames and to friars.[1]

FAUST.

The truly great art thou, whose ear
His proper praise is loath to hear,
Who shrinks from view, and seems to be
But one of many great as he.

CHIRON.

And thou, methinks, hast flattering wile,
Both prince and people to beguile.

FAUST.

At least confess thou hast stood face to face
With all the best and greatest of thy time,
With noblest spirits vied in virtue's race,
And lived the strenuous life of demigods sublime.
Then tell me, 'midst these grand heroic forms,
Which of them all possessed the goodliest charms?

CHIRON.

In that brave Argonautic circle shone
Each hero with a lustre of his own,
And by the force that in his soul prevailed
Supplied the void wherein his comrades failed.

[1] "Well did poets feign Æsculapius and Circe, brother and sister, and both children of the sun; for in all times, in the opinion of the multitude, witches, old women, and impostors have had a competition with physicians. And commonly the most ignorant are the most confident in their undertakings, and will not stick to tell you what disease the gall of a dove is good to cure." — FULLER'S *Holy and Prophane State. The Good Physician.*

Ever where youth and manly grace held sway,
The Dioscuri bore the palm away.
Resolve and speed to act for others' ease
The glory was of the Boreades.
Far-seeing, wary, firm, in council wise,
So lorded Jason, dear to woman's eyes.
Then Orpheus, gentle, given to muse apart,
Whene'er he swept the lyre, subdued each heart.
Keen-sighted Lynceus, he, by shine and dark,
Steered on o'er rock and shoal the sacred bark.
The danger many share we scarcely fear,
And toil grows light, with others by to cheer.

FAUST.

But wilt thou tell me now of Hercules?

CHIRON.

Oh, woe! Awaken not sad memories!
Nor Mars, nor Phœbus had I viewed,
Nor Hermes, born of Maia's line,
When on a day before me stood
What all men worship as divine.
A monarch born was he, in all
Youth's noblest graces past compare!
And yet his elder brother's thrall,
And thrall of women passing fair.
Not earth shall yield his like again,
Nor Hebe to the gods present;
Men weave for him their lays in vain,
In vain the sculptured stone torment.

FAUST.

So then, not all the sculptor's cunning can
Embody charms so superhuman!

Thou'st told me of the finest man,
Now tell me of the finest woman.

CHIRON.

What! Woman's beauty to portray,
I deem it but a bootless task;
Too oft it is, alas the day!
An icy-chill and moveless mask.
But her alone can I account
As lovely, be she maid or wife,
From whom doth flow, as from a fount,
A stream of bright and gladsome life.
Self-blest is beauty, look who list,
Grace has a charm none may resist,
Like Helena, whom once I bore.

FAUST.

Whom once you bore?

CHIRON.

Ay, on my back.

FAUST.

Was I not crazed enough before,
But I must light on such a track?

CHIRON.

She twined her hand into my hair,
As thou dost now.

FAUST.

Oh, joy most rare!
My senses reel! Say how, I pray.
She only is my soul's desire!
Whence, whither didst thou bear her, say?

CHIRON.

Soon told is what you thus require!
The Dioscuri had — it happened then —
Freed their young sister from some thievish men,
Who, little used to yield, took heart of grace,
And, mad with fury, gave their victors chase.
On sped the fugitives, but the morass
Hard by Eleusis checked them as they flew;
The brothers, wading o'er, contrived to pass,
I caught her up, and, swimming, bore her through.
Then she leapt down, and, in a childlike vein,
Playing and fondling with my dripping mane,
Thanked me in tones so sweet, yet calm and sage.
Oh, what a charm she had! Young, yet the joy of age!

FAUST.

Scarce seven years old.

CHIRON.

The philologues, I see,
Self-mystified themselves, have cheated thee.
Your mythologic woman's of a kind
Unlike all other members of her sex;
Each poet paints her after his own mind,
And with his own peculiar fancies decks.
Never too young, nor ever old, her form
Wears at all times a soul-enkindling charm;
When young, she's ravished — old, she's courted still.
Enough! Time cannot bind the poet's will.

FAUST.

Then why by time should Helena be bound?
At Pheræ she was by Achilles found,
Beyond the verge of Time. Oh, rare delight,
To triumph where he loved, in fate's despite!

And should not I on this wild heart of mine
Bear back to life that perfect form divine;
That peer of gods, that soul of endless time,
As grand as gentle, winning as sublime?
Thou long ago, but I to-day have seen
That shape of light, and dignity serene,
Fair to the eye, as in her grace most rare,
And loved, desired, adored as she is fair!
Now am I bound her slave, sense, soul, and thought;
Come death, and welcome, if I win her not!

CHIRON.

Strange being! Men would call you rapturous,
We spirits simply mad, in doting thus.
But by good luck the fit has seized you here;
For 'tis my usage, once in every year,
To call on Manto, Esculapius' daughter,
Who doth in silent prayer her sire implore,
Even for the love and reverence which he taught her,
Some rays of light on leeches' minds to pour,
And turn them from their headlong course of slaughter
I love her most of all the Sibyl guild.
Not given to fancies she, nor fond pretence,
But meek and gentle, yet profoundly skilled,
Unwearied in a wise beneficence.
Stay some short space with her, and, trust me, she
With potent roots will cure thee utterly.

FAUST.

Cured? I will not be cured! My soul is strong!
It will not grovel with the vulgar throng.

CHIRON.

Slight not the virtues of the noble fount!
But see, we're at the place. Be quick, dismount!

FAUST.

Whither to land through the grim dark hast thou
Across the pebbly shallows brought me now?

CHIRON.

Here by Peneios and Olympus too,
Rome grappled Greece in fight, and overthrew
The mightiest empire e'er has known decay.
The burgher triumphs and the king gives way.
Look up and see, above thee, close at hand,
The eternal temple in the moonshine stand!

MANTO (*muttering in a dream*).

Hoof-beats there
Ring on the steps of the sacred stair!
Some demigods are nigh!

CHIRON.

Right! right! Arouse thee! Wake! 'Tis I, 'tis I!

MANTO (*awaking*).

Welcome! I see thou still art true.

CHIRON.

And still thy temple-home is standing, too.

MANTO.

Dost thou still wander, tiring never?

CHIRON.

Thou liv'st in calm contentment ever,
Whilst I go circling round the sphere.

MANTO.

Time circles me, I tarry here.
But he?

CHIRON.

This night of eldritch glee
Hath whirled him hitherward with me.
Helen hath set his brains a-spin —
Helen he is intent to win,
But weets not how he shall begin.
A patient he, of all men best,
Thine Esculapian skill to test.

MANTO.

Me do such spirits chiefly please
As crave impossibilities.

[CHIRON *is already far away.*

MANTO (*to* FAUST).

On, daring heart! Bliss shall be thine!
This dusky path conducts to Proserpine.
Deep in Olympus' caverned base sits she,
And waits forbidden greetings secretly.
I once sped Orpheus on this murky way —
Push on, be bold, and wiser heed display.

[*They descend*

SCENE VI. — *On the Upper Peneios as before.*

SIRENS.

Plunge into Peneios! There,
Oh, what joy, as on we swim
And plash about, our songs to hymn
For these poor mortals all too fair!

Water is of health the spring!
Haste ye then, and, when we gain
The Ægean's azure main,
Rare shall be our revelling! [*Earthquake.*

All afoam the wave runs back,
Flows no longer in its track;
Quakes the ground, the waters shiver,
Bank and gravel smoke and quiver.
Let us fly! Come, sisters all,
Lest disaster worse befall!

Away, and let our pastime be
In bright ocean's Jubilee,
Where the billows, rippling o'er,
Break in sparkles on the shore;
Where Selene o'er our heads
Her serenest lustre spreads,
And, mirrored in the ocean blue,
Moistens all with holy dew.
There is gladsome life and free,
Earthquake here and agony.
Haste, then, hence, if ye be wise!
On this region horror lies.

SEISMOS (*growling and grumbling underground*).

One more thrust with might and main,
Set the shoulders to the strain,
So shall we the surface gain,
Where all must give way before us!

SPHINX.

What a tremor's here, what rumbling,
What a grewsome grating, grumbling,
What a reeling, quaking, ho!
Oscillation to and fro!

'Tis a most provoking pinch,
Yet shall we not move an inch,
Though all hell itself broke o'er us!

Now in wondrous wise a mound
Swells and rises from the ground.
'Tis that very old man hoar
Built up Delos' isle of yore,
Heaving it from ocean's deep,
Safe a teeming dame to keep.
Thrusting, squeezing, straining thew,
Stretching arms, and bending shoulders,
He, like Atlas to the view,
Heaves up earth and turf and boulders,
Sand and gravel, shale and clay,
Tranquil strata of our bay.
So a section up he rends,
Right across the vale extends.
Though waist-deep in earth still squatted,
The colossal Caryatid
Bears unmoved, without a groan,
A tremendous bulk of stone.
Nearer it shall not approach,
Nor upon our haunt encroach.

SEISMOS.

Alone, alone I did it! Truly
Men will this at last allow.
Had I not shaken it up so throughly,
This world, would it be fair as now?
How should yon mountain-ridges cleave
The gorgeous depths of ether blue,
Had I not thrust them forth, to weave
A beauty picturesque to view?
When, whilst my primal sires looked on —
Night and old Chaos — I my force displayed,

And, of the Titans the companion,
With Pelion, as at ball, and Ossa played,
Wildly we plied our youthful freaks,
Until, to crown them all, at last,
Like a twin cap two mountain-peaks
We on Parnassus madly cast,
Where now, for sport and joyance, meet
Apollo and the Muses' choir.
I even upheaved the glorious seat
Of Jove, and all his bolts of fire.
So now with stress stupendous I
Have struggled up from depths profound,
And for inhabitants I cry,
To spread new life and stir around.

SPHINX.

This for birth of primal eld
We assuredly had taken,
Had we not ourselves beheld
How it from the ground was shaken.
Still upward brake and forest spread,
And rocks on rocks still forward tread;
But not for things like these shall Sphinx retreat:
They shall not drive us from our sacred seat.

GRIFFINS.

Gold in specks and veins I spy
Gleam in fissures all about:
Let not such a prize slip by;
Emmets, up, and pick it out!

CHORUS OF ANTS.

Fast as the giant ones
Yonder upheave it,
Seize it, ye pliant ones,
And never leave it.

Quick! Every cranny in
Ranging and rifling;
None that there's any in
Can be too trifling.
Murkiest, shiniest,
Look ye explore it;
Each speck, the tiniest,
Seize it and store it.
Work away with a will,
Till it's all rolled out:
Move the hill how it will,
Do you get its gold out!

GRIFFIN.

Pile the gold up! Pile away!
We on it our claws will lay.
Be the treasure what it may,
Surest of all bolts are they!

PIGMIES.

We have found a footing here;
How, a puzzle is would task us.
That we've come, is very clear;
Whence we come, then, do not ask us!
Every country, where life glows,
Finds a master soon to guide it;
So no rock a fissure shows,
But a dwarf is straight beside it.
There his busy toil he plies,
Model spouse with model mate;
If 'twas so in Paradise,
That is more than I can state.
But we like this for a nest.
Bless the stars that hither sent us,
In the East as in the West
Mother Earth yields foison plenteous.

DACTYLS.

If she in a night these small
Imps did into being call,
Smaller still she will create,
And with kindred creatures mate.

THE OLDEST OF THE PIGMIES.

Hasten, and fit ye
Stoutly to quit ye.
Get to work quickly!
Strike your strokes thickly!
In force though they fail,
Let their swiftness prevail.
Peace still is with ye!
Up with the stithy,
Buckler and glaive
To forge for the brave.

And you, ye emmets, ho,
Swarming there to and fro,
Metals with swiftest speed
Fetch for our need!
Ye dactyls slumberless,
Tiny, but numberless,
Quick, from the brake
Fetch faggot and stake!
Pile the fire, heap it up,
Feed it, and keep it up,
Charcoal to make!

GENERALISSIMO.

With arrow and bow
Away! Hillio, ho!
Shoot me those herons
Down by the marsh there,

Clustering numberless,
Croaking so harsh there!
Quick, let me see them
Slain altogether!
So shall we prank it
In helmet and feather!

ANTS AND DACTYLS.

Iron we bring them —
Ah, who is to save us? —
Which into fetters
They forge to enslave us.
Not yet is the hour come
To rise up defiant;
Then be to your tyrants
Submissive and pliant.

THE CRANES OF IBYCUS.

Shrieks of murder, dying groans,
Wings that flutter in dismay,
Oh, what outcry and what moans
To our peaks here pierce their way!
They are all already slain,
All the lake their blood doth stain.
Wanton passion for display
Shore the heron's plumes away.
See it on the helmet wave
Of each bow-legged pot-bellied knave!
Ye companions of our host,
That in troops o'er ocean post,
We to vengeance call you, in
A cause so near your own akin.
Death, so we avenge their fate!
To this rabble deathless hate!

[*Disperse, croaking in the air.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*on the plain*).

The northern witches I could manage featly;
But those strange phantoms baffle me completely.
And then the Blocksberg's such a handy site,
Go anywhere you will, you're always right.
DAME ILSA on her stone keeps watch and ward;
HENRY upon his peak holds cheery guard;
Then to DESPAIR the SNORERS snort and blow
All as they did a thousand years ago.
But here, stand still or walk, who's he can say
If under him the ground will not give way?
Through a smooth dell as pleasantly I stroll,
Up all at once behind me starts a whole
Hillside, yet scarcely to be called a hill,
And yet quite high enough to part me still
From my pet Sphinxes. Down the valley here
Fires flicker, flashing round strange shapes and drear.
Dancing and wheeling see yon winsome crew
With becks and wiles enticing to pursue.
Soho, then! We, who're used to toothsome fare,
Must still be hankering, no matter where.

LAMIÆ (*luring* MEPHISTOPHELES *after them*).

Onward, still onward,
Faster and faster!
Then with a spiteful
Coyness delaying,
Prattling and playing,
He'll think he's the winner.
'Tis so delightful,
Thus the old sinner
To lure and o'ermaster!
Fretting and groaning,
His stiff foot bemoaning,
Hark, he comes grumbling,
Stumbling and tumbling!

Do what he will,
While before him we fly,
Be it far, be it nigh,
He must follow us still!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*stands still*).

Curst fate! Born but to be made fools of!
From Adam made mere dolts and tools of!
We all grow old, but who grows steady?
Wert thou not fooled enough already?
We know they're good for nothing, all the race.
Pinched at the girdle, painted in the face;
No bit about them wholesome, firm, and sound,
They fall to pieces if you clasp them round;
We know it, feel it, see it at a glance —
Yet let them pipe, and after them we dance.

LAMIÆ (*stopping*).

Stay! he reflects — he pauses — lingers.
Advance, or he'll slip through your fingers!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*striding on*).

Push on! Let no uneasy twitches
Of foolish doubting stay your revel:
Good gracious! if there were no witches,
Who, who the deuce would be the devil?

LAMIÆ (*in coaxing tones*).

Round this hero, round we run;
Soon within his heart for one
Of us, full sire, will love ensue.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Truly in this twilight gleam
Damsels fair to view ye seem,
So I can't be wroth with you.

EMPUSA (*pressing forward*).

Nor yet with me! Me too admit,
As for your company most fit.

LAMIÆ.

She amongst us is too many;
Always spoils our sport, the zany!

EMPUSA (*to* MEPHISTOPHELES).

From your dear cousin hold aloof,
Empusa with the ass's hoof?
You've but a horse's hoof; yet still,
Sir Kinsman, hail, with right good will!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I fancied no one knew me here,
Yet find relations — that's severe!
The old, old tale — Go where you will,
From Harz to Hellas, kinsfolk still!

EMPUSA.

With much decision I can act;
Can take what shape I please, in fact.
But in your honour, for the nonce,
I've donned just now this ass's sconce.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These folk, they set great store, I see,
By being of the family;
Yet come what will, — disaster, shame, —
The ass's head I will disclaim!

LAMIÆ.

Avoid this hag! who puts to flight
All that is most fair and bright:
What was fair and bright before,
When she comes, is so no more.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

These cousins, too, so smooth of speech,
I'm doubtful of them, all and each.
Behind their cheeks so rosy red
Some metamorphosis I dread.

LAMIÆ.

Come set to work now! We are many.
Essay your luck, — if you have any,
The first prize you may win. Come, try!
What means this pitiful to-do?
A miserable wooer you,
To strut and bear your head so high!
And now amongst us see him skip;
Your masks off slow and slyly slip,
And be your true selves by and by.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I've caught the prettiest and most lissome —
[*Embracing her.*
Ugh, ugh! The dry old withered besom!
[*Seizing another.*
And this one? The disgusting fright!

LAMIÆ.

Ha! have we caught you? Serves you right!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I had the short one in my grips —
A lizard from my finger slips,
With poll most serpent-like and smooth!
Anon the taller jade I clasp —
A Thyrsus-staff is in my grasp,
With pine-cone for a head, forsooth!
What means it all? The stout one there,
Better with her perchance I'll fare.
One venture more, — the last, — here goes!
Juicy and plump, just of the size
The Orientals highly prize.
Ugh! The puff-ball bursts beneath my nose!

LAMIÆ.

Away, and round him flit, now like
The lightning, now all blackness! Strike
The witch's baffled son with fear!
On silent wings, a ghastly crew,
Wheel round like bats! We'll make him rue
The hour he thought of coming here.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*shaking himself*).

I have not grown much wiser, 'twould appear.
They're idiots in the north, they're idiots here.
They're humbugs here as there, the ghostly crew,
And bores the bards and people too.
Here has been precious mumming, and
Sense has, as usual, had the upper hand.
At features fair a clutch I made,
And in my grasp found what appalled me;
Yet had it only longer stayed,
Even that delusion had enthralled me.
[*Losing his way among the rocks.*
Where am I? What is this, and how?
This was a path, 'tis chaos now.

The road was smooth; but boulders, lo!
At every turn perplex my feet.
Vainly I clamber to and fro —
Nowhere can I my Sphinxes meet.
One night a hill like this to breed!
Who could have dreamt so mad a thing?
A jolly witches' ride, indeed,
When they with them their Blocksberg bring!

OREAD (*from the natural rock*).

Up here! My mountain's old as time;
Its shape the same as in its prime.
My precipices jagged and sheer,
Pindus' extremest spur, revere!
Unshaken here I lift my head,
As when across me Pompey fled.
That dream-begotten phantasm there
At cock-crow will dissolve in air.
Such fabled forms I ofttimes see
Arise, then vanish suddenly.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Be honour thine, thou reverend head,
With sturdy oaks engarlanded!
To thy recesses dark and deep
The brightest moonshine cannot creep.
But down by yonder brushwood strays
A light that glows with modest rays.
What strange coincidence is this?
Homunculus? It is, it is!
Whither away, my little friend?

HOMUNCULUS.

Thus on from spot to spot I wend.
Much do I long to burst my glassy screen,

And in the best sense into life to enter;
Only from all that I as yet have seen,
I can't find courage for the venture.
But hearken in your ear! On two
Philosophers I've stumbled, who
Are wrapt in deep debate, and all their talk
Is "Nature, Nature," as they walk.
I'll keep by them; for they, I wis,
Must know what earthly being is.
And I at last am sure to learn,
Whither 'tis best for me to turn.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What your own instinct prompts pursue.
For where ghosts find a lodgment, your
Philosopher is welcome too.
And be they many, be they few,
To show his skill off, he is sure
To conjure up a dozen new.
Make no mistakes, and you will ne'er be wise.
By your own doings into being rise!

HOMUNCULUS.

Still, good advice it were not wise to miss.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Go your own way! We shall see more of this.
[*They separate.*

ANAXAGORAS (*to* THALES).

Will not your stubborn mind the truth concede,
Or do you further demonstration need?

THALES.

The wave is stirred by every breeze that creeps,
But from the beetling crags far off it keeps.

ANAXAGORAS.

This mountain-ridge to fire its being owes.

THALES.

From moisture all that lives to being rose.

HOMUNCULUS.

Let me go side by side with you.
I yearn to rise to being too.

ANAXAGORAS.

Could you, O Thales, in one night produce
A mountain such as this from mud and ooze?

THALES.

Nature, has she with her creative powers
E'er had regard to days, and nights, and hours?
Calm and serene she plies her shaping hand;
It is not violence makes even what is grand.

ANAXAGORAS.

But here it did! Raging Plutonic fire,
Steam pent for ages, with explosion dire
Burst through the ancient crusts of earth, and threw
A mountain in a moment into view.

THALES.

What boots it to continue this debate?
The mountain's there; that's well, at any rate.

In such disputes no one step we advance,
Yet lead the patient crowd a precious dance.

ANAXAGORAS.

See, from the mountain how in bevies
They stream to fill each chasm and crevice!
With pigmies, ants, and gnomes it rings,
And other bustling tiny things.
[*To* HOMUNCULUS.
Within your hermit cell retired,
To greatness you have ne'er aspired.
To rule if you your mind can bring,
I'll have you straightway crowned their king.

HOMUNCULUS.

What says my Thales?

THALES.

I say no!
With little people, little deeds;
With great ones even the little grow
To size, and greatness greatness breeds.
Look at these cranes, a dusky cloud!
They threaten yon excited crowd,
And so would threaten, too, the king.
Downward they swoop on rushing wing,
With bony claw and pointed beak,
Their vengeance on the dwarfs to wreak.
The very air is charged with doom,
And tempest hurtles through the gloom.
A wicked elf the herons slew,
As round their quiet mere they drew.
But that death-laden arrowy sleet
Arouses vengeance fell and meet,
And in their kin such ire doth wake,
As blood, and blood alone can slake.

What now avail shield, helm, or spear?
Their heron-plumes, what boot they? See,
How ant and dactyl disappear!
The hosts, they reel, they turn, they flee.

ANAXAGORAS (*after a pause, solemnly*).

If hitherto my praise
Has to the subterranean powers been given,
In this conjuncture I uplift my gaze
To those that have their seat in heaven.
Oh, Throned above, through endless time
Wearing the freshness of thy prime,
Thee I invoke, thee now as then the same,
Threefold in form, threefold in name,
My people in their woe to free,
Diana, Luna, Hecate!
Thou the bosom that expandest,
Thou of thinkers deepest, grandest,
Thou aspect serene that wearest,
Thou a soul of fire that bearest,
Open the abysses drear
Of thy shadowy glooms — and here,
With no necromancer's aid,
Be thine ancient power displayed! [*Pause.*
Is my prayer too quickly heard?
By its force
Has the course
Of nature been disturbed and marred?
And larger, ever larger, and more near
The goddess' orbèd throne wheels down the sphere!
Fearful to the eye and dread
Turns its fire to dusky red.
No nearer! Mighty threatening ball,
Thou'lt crush us, land and sea, and all!
Was it then true, that hags Thessalian by
Dark incantations from the sky

Drew thee down, and wrung from thee
Blight and bane and misery?
The shining disk's o'ercast. It crashes!
And now it lightens and it flashes!
What din, what rushing, whizzing, pouring;
What gusts of wind through thunder roaring!
Behold me fall, abashed and prone,
Down at the footstool of thy throne!
'Twas I invoked thee, I! Do thou
Forgive, forgive my madness now!

[*Throws himself on his face.*

THALES.

What things this man has heard and seen!
They may or they may not have been;
But I felt nothing, ne'ertheless.
Mad hours are these, we must confess,
And Luna sails along the blue,
As smoothly as she used to do.

HOMUNCULUS.

Look at the pigmies' haunt! See, how
The hill, once round, is pointed now!
I felt a hideous crash and shock:
Down from the moon had fallen a rock;
And in an instant made an end,
No warning given, of foe and friend.
Yet arts like these I must revere,
Which in one single night could so
This mighty mountain structure rear,
Both from above and from below.

THALES.

Tush, tush! 'Twas all a dream. That brood
So vile is gone, then let them go!
That thou wert not their king is good.

But now away, away with me,
To Ocean's glorious Jubilee!
There guests of wondrous kind, like thee,
Expected, ay, and honoured be. [*They withdraw.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*clambering up on the opposite side*).

Here I go clambering over crags and rocks,
Among the gnarlèd roots of ancient oaks.
The vapours on my own Harz have a flavour
Of pitch, that much commends them to my favour.
'Tis next to brimstone! Here, among the Greeks,
In vain for even one sulphurous whiff one seeks.
Still, I should like to find out what the spell,
By which they feed the pangs and fires of hell.

DRYAD.

In your own land you for a sage may pass,
Abroad you're little better than an ass.
'Tis not of home you should be thinking here,
But how you should the sacred oaks revere!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We harp on what we've lost; — a feeble vice!
What we've been used to's always Paradise.
But say, what three are those in yonder den,
Who squat and cower in the glimmering shade?

DRYADS.

They are the Phorkyads. Go forward, then,
And speak to them, if you be not afraid.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And wherefore not? I am bewildered vastly!
Proud as I am, even I must needs avow,

I ne'er have looked upon their like till now,
Our hell's worst hags are not one half so ghastly!
Who shall this hideous Triad see,
Yet think there's aught repulsive in
The deadliest of old deadly sin?
We should not suffer them, not we,
To cross the threshold of the worst
And eeriest of our hells accurst.
Yet in the land of beauty, here,
This antique land to glory dear,
They children of the soil appear!
They move, they scent me, it would seem,
Twitter like vampire bats, and pipe and scream.

PHORKYADS.

Sisters! the eye, quick, give it me to spy,
Who to our temple dares approach so nigh!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

O most revered! permit me to draw near,
And beg your triple benediction here!
I am not quite a stranger — so, forgive!
Indeed, I am a distant relative.
Gods of old standing in my time I've known,
To Ops and Rhea made my bow of yore,
The Parcæ, Chaos' sisters, and your own.
I saw them last night, or the night before;
But such as you have never crossed my sight.
I'm positively dumb with sheer delight!

PHORKYADS.

There seems some sense in what this spirit says.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

My only wonder is, no bard has sung your praise!
In statues I have never seen you. Say,

How comes this so, most honoured ones, if you know?
Yours are the forms the chisel should portray,
And not such things as Venus, Pallas, Juno.

PHORKYADS.

In solitude and silent night inurned,
Our thoughts have never on such matters turned.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

How should they? Living from the world retired,
By none can you be seen, or, seen, admired.
For that you must a residence command,
Where art and luxury rule hand in hand;
Where from a block of marble — presto, hey! —
Starts into life a hero every day;
Where —

PHORKYADS.

Peace! And wake in us no yearnings fond!
What should we gain, by knowing aught beyond?
In Night begot, and kin to things of Night,
To ourselves almost unknown, to others quite.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

This being so, there is not much to say;
But you to others may yourselves convey.
One eye suffices for the three, one tooth,
And 'twill comport with mythologic truth
To merge in two the essence of the three,
And lend the semblance of the third to me
For some brief space.

ONE OF THE PHORKYADS.

How think ye? Speaks he sooth?

THE OTHERS.

Let's try it. But without the eye and tooth.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Take these away, and you the essence take,
For these are what the perfect picture make.

ONE OF THE PHORKYADS.

Press one eye close! 'Tis very simply done;
That's well! Now of your dog-teeth show but one!
And you will instantly in profile show
Our sister perfectly from top to toe!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I'm honoured — much! So be it!

PHORKYADS.

So be it!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*as a* PHORKYAD *in profile*).

Done!
Behold in me old Chaos' darling son!

PHORKYADS.

Chaos' undoubted daughters we.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, spite!
They'll scoff at me as an hermaphrodite!

PHORKYADS.

Our new third sister is surpassing fair!
Of eyes we have, and eke of teeth a pair.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I must get out of sight, or I know well
I'll scare the devils of the nether hell! [*Exit.*

SCENE VII. — *Rocky Bays of the Ægean Sea. The Moon pausing in the Zenith.*

SIRENS (*lying on the cliffs around, fluting and singing*).

Thou whom hags Thessalian erst,
By unholy spells rehearsed,
Drew from heaven, serenely bright,
Looking from the vault of night,
With thy silvery radiance lave
Every bright and rippling wave,
And illume yon wondrous throng
Rising now the waves along.
Thy devoted vassals we;
Luna fair, propitious be!

NEREIDS AND TRITONS (*as wonders of the deep*).

Loud with shriller voices sing,
Let them o'er broad ocean ring,
All its people summoning!
As we lay within our caves,
Fathom deep beneath the waves,
Safe from wind and stormy weather,
Your sweet song has drawn us hither.
In our transports we, behold!
Deck ourselves with chains of gold,
Brooch and clasp and diadem,
Rich with jewel and with gem.
All your fruitage, all are these!
Treasures plucked from argosies,
That now wrecked and rotting lie,

Lured to their destruction by
You, the demons of our bay.

SIRENS.

Well we know that in the sea
Fish live well and merrily,
Without pain, or care, or wish!
Still, ye throng so brisk and gay,
Fain we'd like to know to-day
If ye're something more than fish.

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

Ere we hither came, did we
Ponder well how things should be.
Brothers, sisters, come! Not far
Is it needful we should go,
Most conclusively to show
That we more than fishes are. [*They retir*

SIRENS.

In a twinkling they
To Samothrace have sped away,
And fair for them the breezes blow!
What can they expect to gain
Where the high Cabiri reign?
Gods of wondrous kind are they,
Who beget themselves alway,
And what they are they never know.
Deign to linger on thy heights,
Gentle Luna! So the night's
Veil will tarry, and the day
Chase us not from hence away!

THALES (*on the shore to* HOMUNCULUS).

Fain would I lead you to old Nereus! See,
His cavern must be somewhere hereabout;

But such a cross-grained sour old carle is he,
It is no easy thing to draw him out.
Churl that he is, in his distorted sight
No mortal man is ever in the right.
But unto him the future is unveiled,
So he with reverence deep is hailed,
And bears a highly honoured name.
To many, too, he has been kind.

HOMUNCULUS.

Let's knock and try him! I don't mind.
It will not cost me both my glass and flame.

NEREUS.

Men's voices could they be, my ear that met?
With wrath they stir my heart down to its core:
Forms striving to attain to gods, and yet
Doomed to be like themselves for evermore.
Long years ago, had I like others felt,
In ease I might, even like a god, have dwelt;
But I was ever by the wish possessed,
To benefit the men I deemed the best;
And ever when I looked, in hopes to know
My counsels into goodly acts had thriven,
I found that matters were the same as though
My counsels never had been given.

THALES.

Yet people trust thee, man of ocean old.
Most sage of sages, turn us not away!
This flame, that bears a human shape, behold!
Whate'er you counsel him, he will obey.

NEREUS.

Counsel! Has counsel e'er availed with men?
The sagest saw falls dead on stubborn ears.

Oft as men's folly has been mourned in tears,
Wilful as ever they will be again.
Warned I not Paris like a father, ere
His passion did another's wife ensnare?
As bold he trod the Grecian shore, with awe
I told him all that I in vision saw,—
Clouds steaming up, with lurid light aglow,
Charred rafters, massacre and death below,
Troy's day of doom, immortalised in song,
Beaconing through time the curse that waits on wrong.
He mocked the old man's words, the ribald boy,
Obeyed the impulse of his lust, and Troy,
A giant corpse, fell, worn with many a fray,
To Pindus' eagles a right welcome prey.
Ulysses, too, foretold I not to him
Circe's dark wiles, the Cyclops' horrors grim?
His own delays, the follies of his train,
What not, besides! Yet where to him the gain?
Till at long last the favouring billows bore
The weary wanderer to a friendly shore.

THALES.

Such conduct to the sage is fraught with pain,
Yet his heart prompts him on to fresh essay.
Of thanks that glad his soul, one little grain
Will bushels of ingratitude outweigh.
For we are here to ask no trivial boon:
The boy there wishes to attain, and soon,
To being, and as sagely as he may.

NEREUS.

Mar not my mood — 'tis of no common kind;
Far other matters now possess my mind.
My daughters I have summoned here to me,
The Dorides, the Graces of the Sea.

Not on Olympus, nor on earth you'll meet
With forms so beautiful, so moving sweet.
From water dragons, with a bending sweep
Of subtlest charm, on Neptune's steeds they leap,
And with the element so softly blend,
The foam-flakes scarce beneath them seem to bend.
'Mid rainbow splendours in her shelly car
Comes Galatea, of them all the star,
Of Paphos hailed the goddess, since the day
When Aphrodite turned from us away;
And so for many a year, she as her own
The Temple town has claimed, and chariot throne.
Begone! Nor by your questionings eclipse
The solemn transports of a father's bliss;
I would not have, in such an hour as this,
Hate in my heart, nor fury on my lips.
Away to Proteus! Ask that being strange, —
He will your purpose better serve than me, —
How yonder boy may pass from change to change,
And come at length to be. [*Retires toward the sea.*

THALES.

We have gained nothing by this step; for, say
We light on Proteus, straight he melts away.
And, after all, he'll only, if he stays,
Give answers that bewilder and amaze.
Still, such advice you lack; so, come what may,
Let's make the trial. Onward, then, away!
[*They retire.*

SIRENS (*above, on the rocks*).

See, what are these that glide
Far o'er the billowy tide?
'Tis as white sails were nearing,
By gentle breezes steering,

So radiantly they shine,
These ocean-nymphs divine!
Let us descend! You hear
Their voices sweet and clear.

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

What we bring with us to-night
Shall content you and delight.
Flames a dread form from the field
Of Chelone's giant shield;
Gods they be, whom here we bring:
Hymns ye must of glory sing!

SIRENS.

Great in might, though small in form,
Such as shipwrecked are ye save,
When in thunder and in storm
Ships go down beneath the wave;
Gods in deepest reverence held
From the days of primal eld!

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

We bring the Cabiri hither, to keep
Peace, while we revel it over the deep;
For in their presence, so holy be they,
Neptune will gently exert his sway.

SIRENS.

Yield we must to you:
If a vessel's wrecked,
Ever ye her crew
Resistlessly protect.

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

Three we have transported thus;
The fourth refused to come with us.
He declared he was the best,
And had to think for all the rest.

SIRENS.

So one god, it would appear,
Likes at other gods to sneer.
All that gracious are revere,
All that are malignant fear!

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

Seven of them by rights there be.

SIRENS.

Where, then, are the other three?

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

To answer that were no easy task.
For them you may in Olympus ask.
There the Eighth, too, you may find,
Who was never in anybody's mind.
Their grace we have and hope to get,
But they are not all complete as yet.
These Incomparables still
  On and on aspire,
For the Unattainable
  Hungering with desire.

SIRENS.

'Tis our custom, evermore
Every throne to bow before,

In the Sun and in the Moon,
There to worship and adore;
It repays us late or soon.

NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

How must our fame transcendent be,
The leaders of this Jubilee!

SIRENS.

The heroes of the olden time
Reached not a glory so sublime,
How high soe'er their fame may run.
If they the Golden Fleece have won,
You, you have the Cabiri!

UNIVERSAL CHORUS.

If they the Golden Fleece have won,
You, you / We, we } have the Cabiri!

HOMUNCULUS.

To me these uncouth shapes are like
Vile earthen pots: by token,
Sages their heads against them strike,
And, though hard, get them broken.

THALES.

That's just the thing they long for! Just
As coin takes value from the rust.

PROTEUS (*invisible*).

Such shows delight a fabler old like me;
More prized the more preposterous they be.

THALES.

Where art thou, Proteus?

PROTEUS (*ventriloquially, now near, now far off*).

Here, and here!

THALES.

I pardon you the stale old joke.
I am a friend — no mocking insincere!
I know you sham the place from which you spoke.

PROTEUS (*as from a distance*).

Farewell!

THALES (*whispers to the* HOMUNCULUS).

He's close at hand! Flame out now! Whish!
He is as curious as a fish,
And, wheresoever he may hide,
Your blaze will lure him to your side.

HOMUNCULUS.

I'll pour a flood of light — but gently though,
Or into splinters, crack! my glass will go.

PROTEUS (*in the form of a gigantic tortoise*).

What sheds a light so soft and bright?

THALES (*concealing the* HOMUNCULUS).

Good! good! Come nearer, if you'd see't.
Don't grudge the trouble, 'tis but slight!
And show yourself upon two human feet.
'Tis by our grace and leave alone,
That what we've hidden will be shown.

PROTEUS.

You have not lost your skill in dodges clever.

THALES.

Of changing shapes you're quite as fond as ever.
[*Uncovers the* HOMUNCULUS.

PROTEUS (*amazed*).

A luminous dwarf! Was never such sight? Never!

THALES.

He wants advice from you, for he would fain
To being real and complete attain.
He came into the world, I've heard him say,
Only by half in some mysterious way.
With gifts of spirit he is dowried well,
But sorely lacks in what is tangible.
As now the glass there only gives him weight,
He with all speed would be incorporate.

PROTEUS.

A real virgin's son art thou;
Thou art before thou ought to be, somehow.

THALES (*in a whisper*).

In other ways, methinks, all is not right.
He is, I fancy, an hermaphrodite.

PROTEUS.

So much the better, since in every case
He's sure to find himself not out of place.
But much reflection here no good will do,
In the wide sea you must begin anew!

There in the little things commence,
And on the less delight to feed:
So by degrees you grow, and thence
To higher excellence succeed.

HOMUNCULUS.

The air blows sweet and softly here. The dew
Thrills me with rapture through and through.

PROTEUS.

Right, right, my pretty youth! And you,
As you go on, will find it sweeter still.
On this small tongue of land the dew
Exhales a vapour more ineffable.
See right in front yon wondrous train,
That's wafted hither o'er the main!
Come with me to them!

THALES.

Take me too!

HOMUNCULUS.

A wondrous ghostly three are we to view!

TELCHINES OF RHODES.

Upon Hippocampi and Sea-dragons, bearing Neptune's Trident.

CHORUS.

The trident of Neptune we forged, that at will
The angriest waves of the ocean can still.
If the Thund'rer his storm-clouds unrolls overhead,
Straight Neptune opposes their armament dread;
And as down from above lightning quivers and flashes,
So up from below wave after wave dashes;

And the bark, that in anguish 'twixt billow and blast
Has been tossed to and fro, is sucked down at the last;
Then as he has lent us his sceptre to-day,
Serene and at ease let us gambol and play!

SIRENS.

Hail, ye priests of Helios, hail,
Blest ones of the cheerful day,
Now whilst we to Luna pale
Our devoted homage pay!

TELCHINES.

Fair queen of the bow that shines o'er us so bright,
Thou hearest thy brother extolled with delight!
To Rhodes the high-favoured thine ear thou dost lend,
Whence unto him Pæans eternal ascend.
He begins the day's course, and on us at its close
A long level glance keen and fiery he throws.
The mountains, the cities, the shore, and the wave,
Give delight to the god, and are beauteous and brave.
No mist hangs around us, and if one comes near,
A zephyr, a beam, and our island is clear!
In manifold shapes he beholds himself there,
As stripling, as giant, as mighty, as fair.
We, we were the first did such beings divine
In the forms, not unworthy, of mortals enshrine!

PROTEUS.

Let them sing, and let them boast!
Dead works are a jest, at most,
Beside the sun's life-giving rays;
They melt and mould, and when at last
Their handiwork in brass is cast,
Straightway they riot in its praise.

But what's the end of all their vaunted show
These images of gods renowned,
An earthquake hurled them to the ground;
And they've been melted down long, long ago.

The throes of earth, or past or present,
Are always anything but pleasant.
Life in the billows better fares;
Thee to the eternal waters bears
The Dolphin Proteus. (*Transforms himself.*) See, 'tis done!
There will you thrive in all you try:
So leap upon my back, and I
Will wed you to the deep anon!

THALES.

Yield to the noble aspiration
Of new-commencing your creation.
Prepare for mighty effort now!
By laws eternal move, and thou,
Through countless changes having passed,
Shalt rise into a man at last.

[HOMUNCULUS *mounts the Proteus-dolphin.*

PROTEUS.

In spirit hence to ocean wide!
Unfettered there shalt thou abide,
There roam as blithe as free;
But yearn not for a higher state,
For, once as man incorporate,
All's over then with thee.

THALES.

That's as things chance: it is a fine thing, too,
To be a proper man in season due.

PROTEUS (*to* THALES).

If of your stamp he be, perchance it may.
You are no fleeting creature of a day;
For 'tis now many hundred years, since I
'Mongst the pale ghosts first saw you trooping by.

SIRENS (*on the rocks*).

Lo, what clouds are yonder streaming
  Round the moon in circlet bright!
Doves they are, love-kindled, gleaming,
  Pinioned as with purest light.
Paphos forth has sent them, glowing
  Harbingers of love and joy;
Perfect is our feast, o'erflowing
  Full with bliss without alloy!

NEREUS (*advancing to* THALES).

Roamers through the night might deem
Yonder halo merely haze,
But we spirits know the gleam,
Hail it with a wiser gaze.
They are doves, that round my child
In her shelly chariot fly,
Wondrous is their flight and wild,
Learned in ages long gone by.

THALES.

I too look on that as best
Which to good men pleasure gives,
When in warm and cosy nest
Something holy haunts and lives.

PSYLLI AND MARSI (*on sea-bulls, sea-calves, and rams*).

In Cyprus' wild cave-recesses,
Where the god of the sea annoys not,
Where Seismos shakes and destroys not,
Where the breeze evermore wafts caresses
There Cypris's chariot, the golden,
We watch, as we watched in the olden
Days, in contentment serene;
And our fairest we bring in the hushing
Of night, o'er the rippling waves rushing,
In the bloom of her loveliness flushing,
By the new race of mortals unseen.
Our duty thus silently plying,
Nor eagle, nor yet wingèd lion,
Dismays us, nor cross, no, nor crescent;
However, through changes incessant,
On earth they may fool it, and rule it,
Now hither, now thitherward swaying,
Pursuing, and smiting, and slaying,
Waste cities and harvest-fields laying,
'Tis ever our care
To herald our mistress, the matchlessly fair.

SIRENS.

Through the waves serenely cleaving,
Circling round the car divine,
And like serpents interweaving,
Row on row, and line on line,
Speed ye onwards, stately gliding,
Ocean's daughters, pleasing wild,
With your Galatea guiding,
All her mother in my child!
Grave is she, of godlike seeming,
As of an immortal race,
Yet like gentle human women,
Sweet, and of alluring grace.

DORIDES (*passing in chorus before* NEREUS, *clustering upon dolphins*).

Luna, shine, thy radiance pouring
Round this flower of youth, for here
To our sire we bring, imploring
His good-will, our bridegrooms dear!
[*To* NEREUS
Boys we rescued when the billow
Whelmed them in the tempest's wrack;
Couching them on rushy pillow,
We to life caressed them back!
Now with kisses to delight us,
Kisses all of fire, must they
For the life we gave requite us;
View them, then, with grace, we pray!

NEREUS.

The twofold gain who would not highly treasure,
In doing others grace, to do himself a pleasure?

DORIDES.

Father, did we well? To hold them,
Grant us, so shall we be blest:
All undying let us fold them
To our ever-youthful breast.

NEREUS.

Would you enjoy your lovely prey,
Then mould each stripling to a man;
But children, know, I never may
Bestow what Zeus, Zeus only, can.
The wave, on which you're swept and tossed,
Makes love, too, changeful evermore:
If on their hearts your hold be lost,
Best set them quietly on shore!

DORIDES.

Sweet boys, we love ye well, but soon
From you, alas! must sever;
The gods deny the wished-for boon,
A love that loves for ever.

THE YOUTHS.

Still love and tend us, and your own
Stout ship-boys will not falter;
Such goodly cheer we ne'er have known,
Nor would for better alter.

[GALATEA *approaches in the shell chariot.*

NEREUS.

My darling!

GALATEA.

O father, what ecstasy!
Stay, dolphins, stay! My gaze is riveted by thee!

NEREUS.

Already are they passed, already gone,
In sweeping circles steering o'er the ocean;
What is to them the yearning heart's emotion?
Oh, would that I with them were sailing on!
Yet in that one brief glance is such delight,
As doth the long year's yearning well requite!

THALES.

Hail! hail! hail evermore!
With joy I am brimming o'er,
Each fibre and nerve, through and through
By the Beautiful pierced, and the True!
From water sprang all things, and all
Are by water upheld or must fall.

Then, ocean, grant thou for our aiding
Thine influence ever-pervading!
If by thee the clouds were disspread not,
If by thee the rich brooklets were shed not,
If by thee the streams all ways were sped not,
And the rush of the torrents were fed not,
What then were the universe, mountain and plain?
'Tis thou dost all life that is freshest maintain!

ECHO.

Chorus of the whole circle.

'Tis from thee flows all life that is freshest amain.

NEREUS.

Already they are far from shore,
Meet me eye to eye no more!
On they speed, a countless train,
All in festival array,
In a long extended chain,
Winding, circling on their way.
But my Galatea's car,
Still I see it sharp and bright!
It is shining like a star
Through them all upon the sight!
That dear cynosure is steeped in light!
Though it be removed so far,
Still it shimmers bright and clear,
Ever true and ever near!

HOMUNCULUS.

'Mid these waters soft and bright,
All whereon I flash my light
Is bewitching fair!

PROTEUS.

'Mid these waters living bright,
For the first time gleams thy light
With a music rare!

NEREUS.

But lo! what fresh mystery yonder between
The groups of the children of ocean is seen?
What flames round the car, round my darling one's feet?
Now wildly it flashes, now softly, now sweet,
As if with love's passionate pulses it beat!

THALES.

'Tis Homunculus, blinded by Proteus' deceit!
The symptons are these of a yearning intense;
Soon the cry shall be heard of an agonised moan:
He will shatter his glass on the radiant throne.
Now it flames, now it lightens, now pours forth immense.

SIRENS.

What fiery marvel illumines the sea,
Where wave breaks on wave in sparkles of light?
It so lightens, and brightens, and flashes, that we
See their forms all aglow as they move through the night,
And flames round them eddy and glimmer and gleam.
Then be Eros, of all the Beginner, supreme!

Hail, ye ocean billows, bound
With zone of holy fire around!
Water, hail! Hail, fire! Hail, all
Doings strange that here befall!

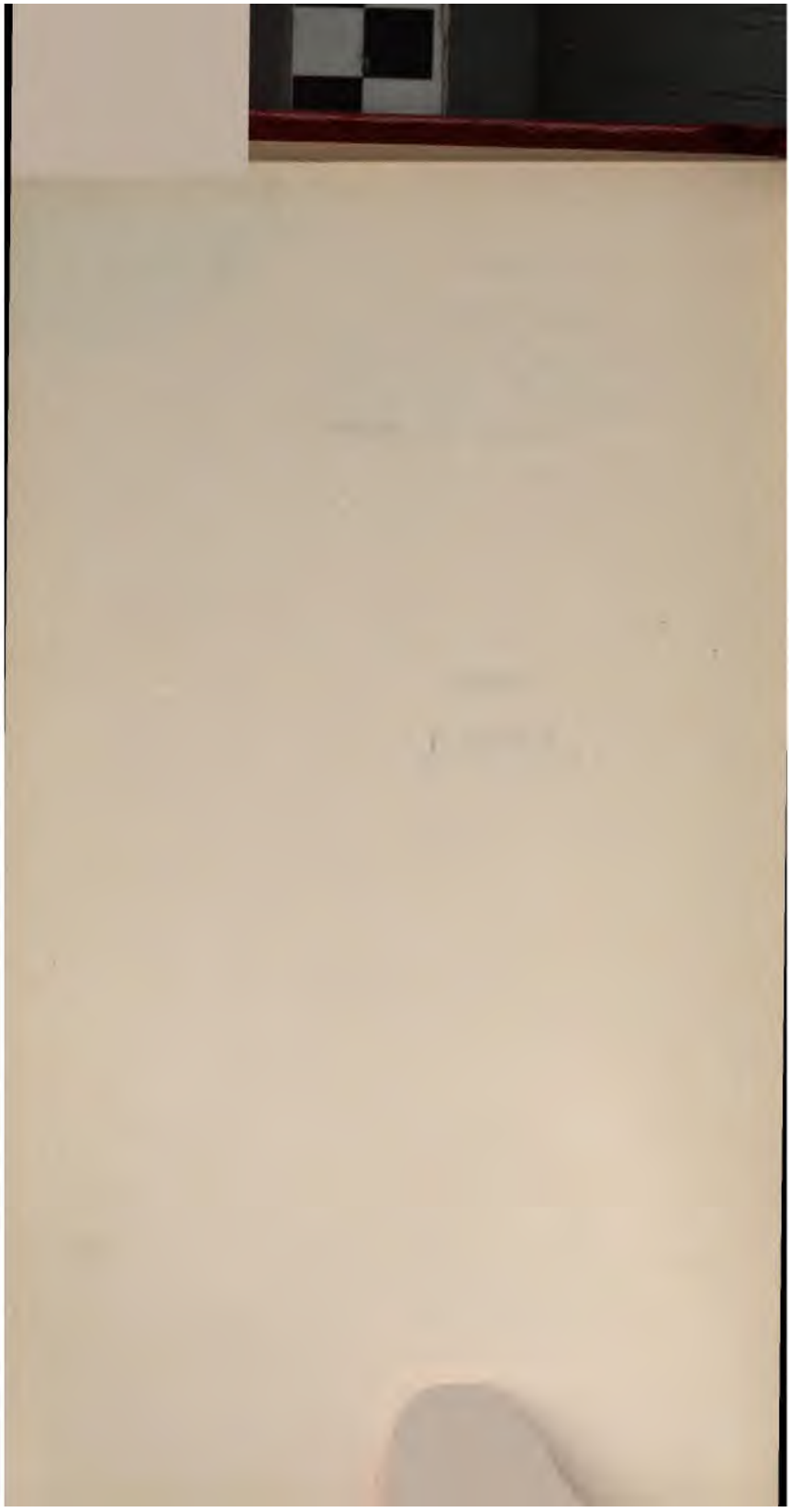
GENERAL CHORUS.

Hail, ye breezes, blowing free!
Hail, ye caves of mystery!
You we praise, and you adore,
Mighty elemental Four!

END OF VOLUME I.

FAUST

VOLUME II



Faust: A Tragedy

ACT III.

SCENE. — *In front of the Palace of Menelaus at Sparta.*

Enter HELEN, *with a Chorus of Captive Trojan Women.* — PANTHALIS *leader of the Chorus.*

HELENA.

I, HELENA, of men much famed, and much reviled,
From yonder shore, where we but now have landed, come,
Still reeling with the heave, and over-restless roll
Of ocean billows wild, whose high and beauty [illegible]
By Euros' might and great Poseidon's grace, [illegible] borne
Us back from Phrygia's plains to these [illegible] bays.
Now on the sea-beach joys King Menelaus, thus
Returning safe with all his bravest warriors back.
But oh, how welcome thou to me, thou mansion fair,
Which Tyndarus, my sire, when home returning, reared,
Hard by the broad incline of Pallas' sacred hill;
And, when I here with Clytemnestra, sisterly,
With Castor, Pollux too, grew up in gladsome play,
That in its trappings rich all Sparta's homes excelled!
Ye portal's brazen wings, lo, here I bid ye hail!
Through ye, wide open flung with hospitable sweep,

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I, HELENA, of men much famed, and much reviled,
From yonder shore, where we but now have landed, come,
Still reeling with the heave, and ever-restless roll
Of ocean billows wild, whose high and foamy crests,
By Euros' might and great Poseidon's grace, have borne
Us back from Phrygia's plains to these our native bays.
Now on the sea-beach joys King Menelaus, thus
Returning safe with all his bravest warriors back.
But oh, how welcome thou to me, thou mansion fair,
Which Tyndarus, my sire, when home réturning, reared,
Hard by the broad incline of Pallas' sacred hill;
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With Castor, Pollux too, grew up in gladsome play,
That in its trappings rich all Sparta's homes excelled!
Ye portal's brazen wings, lo, here I bid ye hail!
Through ye, wide open flung with hospitable sweep,

Did Menelaus first, of many chosen the chief,
Upon my vision beam in bridegroom guise of yore.
Expand to me again, that, as doth spouse beseem,
My lord's high urgent 'hest I rightly may fulfil!
Let me go in, and oh! may all the storms of fate,
Which round my path have swept till now, remain behind!
For since I parted hence, a stranger then to care,
To offer homage due at Cytherea's shrine,
And there was by a spoiler seized, the Phrygian boy,
Hath misadventure much befallen, which men are fain
To babble of, but which offends his ear, whose tale,
Expanding as it spread, to gossip fable grew.

CHORUS.

Fairest of women, despise not thou!
The treasure, supreme in honour, is thine!
For to thee, thee alone, has the chief boon been given,
The fame of a beauty unmatched in the world.
Before the hero his name resounds,
And therefore his port is proud,
But even the stubbornest veils his pride
In the presence of beauty, the lord of all.

HELENA.

Enough said! With my lord I hitherward have sailed,
And now before him I am to his city sent;
Yet what his purpose is, defies me to divine.
Come I as consort back? Or come I as a queen?
Or as a victim for the princes' direful woes,
And for the years of loss and shame the Greeks endured?
A captive, or a friend recaptured, which am I?
For the Immortals marked a doubtful fame, belike,
And destiny for me, — companions dread that wait
On beauty, and upon the very threshold here

Stand at my side with dark and threatening mien.
For even within the hollow ship my husband scarce
Vouchsafed to me one look, nor word of comfort spoke,
As brooding some fell purpose, fronting me he sat.
But when Eurotas' deep-indented bay we gained,
Scarce of our vessels' prows the foremost kissed the land,
When, starting up, he spake, as by the God-inspired.
"My warriors troop by troop shall from the ships descend,
And I will marshal them in order on the beach;
But thou, go on at once, still keeping by the banks,
Wealthy in fruit, that bound Eurotas' sacred stream,
Driving the steeds across the moist bloom-dappled meads,
Until thou shalt arrive on the delightsome plain
Where Lacedemon, once a broad and fertile field,
Close girdled by the solemn mountains, lifts its roofs.
There enter straight the lofty tower-crowned royal house,
And round thee call the maids whom there I left behind,
Also the Stewardess, that matron old and sage.
Bid her to thee the pile of hoarded treasures show,
Was by thy sire bequeathed, and which, in war and peace
Augmenting evermore, I have myself amassed.
In order duly ranged thou'lt find them all; for 'tis
The prince's privilege to find, on his return,
The things preserved with care, in their appointed place,
Even as he left them, when he parted from his home.
For nothing of himself the slave hath power to change."

CHORUS.

Now gladden thine eye and thy heart by viewing
The glorious treasures, the spoils of years!

For the armlet fair, and the jewelled crown
Rest haughtily there, of their lustre proud;
But enter and challenge them all, right soon
Shall they 'quip them for war.
I joy in the conflict where beauty vies
With gold and with pearl and with luminous gem.

HELENA.

Thereafter from my lord there followed this command:
"Now when in order all thou thoroughly hast viewed,
As many tripods take as thou shalt needful deem,
And vessels of all kinds, which he at hand requires
Who to the gods performs high sacrificial rites;—
The caldrons, salvers too, and patera withal;
Pure water crystal clear from the sacred fount be by,
In lofty pitchers — well-dried fagots furthermore,
That quickly kindle into flame, have ready there;
And, last of all, fail not a knife of keenest edge;
What other things may lack I trust thy care to find."
So spake he, urging my departure straight; but nought
That breathes the breath of life did his injunctions show,
Which he, in honour of the Olympians, wished to slay.
'Tis very strange; yet I will nurse that thought no more,
But leave all to the will of the great gods on high,
Who bring to pass whate'er they in their minds decree;
And seem it good to man, or seem it ill, it must
Be borne; for mortal man, his duty is to bear.
The ministering priest full many a time hath raised
The ponderous axe above the earth-bowed victim's neck,
Yet could not strike the blow, for suddenly his hand
By intervening foe or deity was stayed.

CHORUS.

The fate of the future thou canst not divine.
Enter, queen, enter,
Be of good cheer!
Good and ill cometh
To man without warning;
E'en when foretold us we credit it not.
What saw we, when Troy was in flames, before us?
Death, death only, a death of shame!
Yet are we not here,
Mated with thee, serving thee joyfully,
Beholding the sun in heaven resplendent,
Beholding what is on the earth most fair,
Thee, to us happy ones gracious and kind!

HELENA.

A truce to fear! Whate'er betide, 'tis meet that I,
No longer lingering, should ascend the royal house,
Which, long lost, sighed for much, and well-nigh forfeited,
Stands once again before my eyes, I know not how.
With weak and tottering tread I mount its lofty steps,
Up which erewhile I sprang, a light and frolic child.

CHORUS.

Fling, O ye sisters, that
Mourn your captivity,
Grief to the winds!
Share in the bliss
Of your mistress,
Share in Helena's bliss,
Who joyfully neareth
The hearth of her fathers
With step that, though late
To return, is more firm
For the years that have flown.

Praise ye the holy,
Happy-restoring
And home-bringing gods!
Over fate's rudest shocks,
As upon pinions,
Floats the enfranchised one, the while
The captive, vainly his arms outspreading
Over his dungeon's ramparts,
Pines dejected away.

But a god caught her up
In her exile afar;
And from Ilion's ruins
Transported her back
To the old, newly decorate
Home of her sires,
After unspeakable
Pleasures and pains,
On the days of her childhood
To ponder anew.

PANTHALIS (*as leader of the Chorus*).

Forsake we now the joy environed path of song,
And turn our gaze awhile upon the portal's wings.
What see I, sisters? Lo, the queen returning here,
And flying too with wild and agitated step?
What is it, mighty queen? What sight or sound of dread
Could greet thee in thy halls, instead of welcoming
From thine own people? This expect not to conceal;
For plainly can I read displeasure on thy brow,
A wrath of noble sort, that struggles with surprise.

HELENA (*who has entered in great agitation, leaving the folding-doors open*).

Beseemeth not Jove's child to own a vulgar dread,
Nor fleeting touch of fear hath power to move her soul

But Horror grim, that, in the womb of ancient Night
And Chaos old begot, in form and shape diverse,
As clouds of lurid smoke from the volcano's throat,
Comes whirling forth, doth even the hero's breast appal.
In such appalling wise the Stygian gods to-day
My entrance to my home have signalised, that fain
I would, like guest dismissed, for ever bid farewell
To that dear threshold, ofttime trod, and yearned for long.
But no! I have retreated hither to the light,
Nor shall ye drive me further, Powers, whate'er ye be!
Some expiation I'll devise, then, purged from blame,
The hearth-fire may bid hail the consort like her lord.

PANTHALIS.

Disclose, O noble queen, to thy handmaidens, who
In reverence and in love attend thee, what hath chanced!

HELENA.

The thing that I have seen your eyes shall also see,
If ancient Night hath not within her murky womb
With sudden close engulfed the creature which she bred.
That ye may know it, list! My words its form shall paint.
As I, my thoughts intent upon my mission, passed
With solemn tread along the inmost palace halls,
I marvelled at the hushed and vacant corridors,
No sound fell on the ear of moving to and fro,
Nor met the eye the sweep of quick and busy haste.
No maid was to be seen, nor stewardess, who erst
With friendly welcome wont all strangers to salute.
But to the inner hearth when I had made my way,
There, by the embers of the smouldering fire, I saw,
Crouched on the ground, a woman thickly muffled, huge;
Asleep she seemed not, but like one in reverie wrapt.

With voice of stern command I bade her "Up, to work!"
Not doubting 'twas the aged stewardess, the same
My lord had sagely left behind to guard his home;
Yet moveless as a stone, still muffled there she sits.
Stirred by my threats, at length she raises her right arm,
As though from hearth and hall to beckon me away.
In wrath I turn away from her, and presently
Speed to the steps whereon towers high the thalamus,
Magnificently decked, the treasure-room hard by;
But swiftly from the ground up springs the wondrous shape,
Imperiously obstructs my passage, and displays,
In long and meagre bulk, with hollow bloodshot eyes,
A form so wild and weird, might eye and soul confound.
But to the winds I speak; for impotent are words,
To body forth to life such images as these.
There! See her for yourselves! She dares confront the light!
Here we bear sway, until our royal lord arrives.
The ghastly births of Night doth Phœbus, Beauty's friend,
Chase to their native dens, or fetter fast in chains.

[PHORKYAS *appears on the threshold between the door-posts.*

CHORUS.

Much have I seen and known, though my tresses
Youthfully undulate still round my temples,
Horrors I've witnessed full many, the woful
Havoc of warfare, Ilion, the night
When it fell!

Over the cloud-covered, dust-thickened din of
Death-grappling warriors, heard I the gods
Shouting, dread clamour! heard I the brazen
Voices of Discord clang through the field
To the walls.

Ah, they yet towered high, Ilion's
Walls! But the merciless
Flame shot from roof to roof,
Spreading and broadening,
Hitherward, thitherward,
Fanned by the fury
Itself had engendered,
Over the city by night.

Flying I saw, through smoke and glare,
And tongues of eddying flame,
Deities grimly stalk in wrath,
Figures wonderful, gigantic,
Striding through the dusky
Fire-illumined gloom.

Did I see, or was it fancy
Shaped amid my spirit's anguish
Phantoms so confused and wild?
That I ne'er may tell.
Yet that with my eyes I gaze on
This revolting thing before me,
Of a verity I know.
Yea, my very hands might grasp it,
Did not terror hold me back
From the venture dread.

Which of the daughters
Of Phorkys art thou?
For of her kindred
Surely thou art.
Art thou, perchance, sprung of the Graiæ,
Sisters appalling, of Darkness engendered,
Alternately using
One eye and one tooth?

Darest thou, monster,
Sidelong with beauty,
Thyself unto Phœbus'
Keen glances unveil?
Yet come thou out boldly, it recks not,
For on ugliness looketh he never,
Even as his blessèd eye never
The gloom of a shadow beholds.

But alas! we mortals are fated
By a woful doom to endure
The unspeakable anguish of eye,
Which the monstrous, the evermore loathly,
In lovers of beauty awake.

Hear then, hear, if unblushingly
Thou wilt confront us, curses,
Threatenings of manifold ill
From the ban-laden lips of the blest ones,
Who are moulded and made by the gods!

PHORKYAS.

Old is the saw, but true its meaning and profound,
That modesty doth ne'er with beauty, hand in hand,
One common path along the verdant earth pursue.
Enrooted deep in both hate from of old abides,
And thus where'er, whene'er, they cross each other's track,
Each doth her back upon her adversary turn,
Then speedeth on her way with quickened tread again;
Coy modesty perplexed, but beauty proud and fierce,
Till Orcus' hollow night at length devours her up,
If Age hath not before subdued her haughty pride.
Ye wantons, now I find ye, wafted from afar,
Wagging your saucy tongues, like flight of clangorous cranes,

Hoarse-screaming as they wing above our heads, a long
And sable cloud, and send a croaking clamour down,
Which lures the wanderer, pacing silent on his way,
To raise his eyes aloft; but they hold on their course,
And so goes he on his: so will it be with us.
Who, then, are ye, that thus with Mænad fury wild,
Like drunken brawlers, dare these royal gates assail?
Who are ye, I would know, that howl your wrath against
The house's stewardess, like dogs that bay the moon?
Think ye, I know not well the kith whereof ye come?
Thou callow brood, begot of war, in battle nursed,
Lascivious crew, at once seducing and seduced,
That sap the warrior's strength, the burgher's too as well!
Thus huddled here, to me ye seem a locust swarm,
Alighted like a cloud upon the early grain.
Consumers ye of others' industry! Smooth-lipped
Destroyers of the fruits of year-long wary thrift!
And thou, thou ravished, huckstered, fingered piece of goods!

HELENA.

Who, with the mistress by, the handmaids dares to chide,
Audaciously usurps her privilege of rule;
For unto her alone pertains it to extol
Whoso be worthy praise, as to chastise the ill.
Full well content am I with the good service they
Did at my bidding, when great Ilion's mighty strength
That lengthened leaguer stood, and fell, and low was laid;
Nor less throughout our travel's drear vicissitudes,
Where people commonly think only of themselves.
Here from the busy train like conduct I expect;
Not what the servant is, but how he serves, the lord
Inquires. Then silence, thou! and rail on them no more!

If thou the royal house hast duly kept till now,
The mistress' place supplying, be it to thy praise.
But now herself is come, step back into thy sphere,
Lest chastisement, not guerdon, follow as thy due!

PHORKYAS.

To chide the household is a high prerogative,
Which the heaven-favoured lord's illustrious spouse, by years
Of management discreet, most rightfully doth earn.
As thou, whom now I know, dost here again resume
Thy whilom place of queen, and mistress of the house,
Seize thou the reins, that long have hung relaxed, rule now,
The treasures take in charge, and take us too with them;
But, chief of all, shield me, that oldest am in years,
From this pert band, who near thy swan-like loveliness
Are but a flock of cackling, poorly feathered geese.

PANTHALIS.

How hideous showeth hideousness by beauty's side!

PHORKYAS.

How foolish by the side of wisdom foolishness!

(*The following repartees are spoken by the Choretides, stepping out individually from the Chorus:*)

CHORETIDE 1.

Tell us of father Erebus, of mother Night!

PHORKYAS.

Then speak of Scylla thou, thy sister uterine!

CHORETIDE 2.

From thy ancestral stock hath many a monster sprung.

PHORKYAS.

Away to Orcus, seek thy kith and kindred there!

CHORETIDE 3.

Who have their dwelling there are much too young for thee.

PHORKYAS.

Tiresias, hoar with eld, go wooing unto him!

CHORETIDE 4.

Thy great-granddaughter was Orion's nurse, I trow.

PHORKYAS.

By Harpies thou, I ween, wert fattened up in filth.

CHORETIDE 5.

Such scragginess supreme, how dost thou nourish that?

PHORKYAS.

Not with the blood which thou art ever keen to lap.

CHORETIDE 6.

Thy teeth for corpses long, a loathly corpse thyself.

PHORKYAS.

Pah! in thy saucy chops a vampire's grinders gleam.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Thine should be closed, were I to mention who thou art.

PHORKYAS.

Name thou thine own name first, then is the riddle solved.

HELENA.

In sorrow, not in wrath, I interpose to place
My ban upon this wild and stormy war of words.
For to the master nought more mischievous befalls,
Than rancours by his trusty serfs in secret nursed.
His mandates' echo then returns to him no more
Harmoniously in deeds with ready zeal performed;
No! gusts of wilful brawl buzz evermore around
His 'wildered head, while he commands and chides in vain;
Nor this alone. Ye have in your unmannered wrath
Evoked and conjured forth dread forms of mould unblest,
That throng upon me so, I feel as I were dragged
To Orcus down, despite the natal soil I tread.
Is't memory, or fancy, thus lays hold on me?
Was I all this? or am I? Or am I to be
The phantom dire to scare yon town-destroying crew?
My maidens quail; but thou, the oldest of them all,
Thou art unmoved, — then speak, resolve me of my fears.

PHORKYAS.

Who on long years of joy diversified looks back,
To him heaven's choicest gifts appear at last a dream.
But thou, high-favoured far beyond all bound or stint,
Along thy way of life didst only suitors see,
With souls on fire to dare all perils for thy love.
Thee Theseus, fired with passion, early carried off,
A man of glorious mould, and stout as Hercules.

HELENA.

He bore me off by force, a ten years' timorous dce,
And in Aphidnus' keep in Attica immured.

PHORKYAS.

But thence by Castor and by Pollux soon set free,
A rare heroic band came wooing to thy feet.

HELENA.

But my heart's secret love, I willingly avow,
Patroclus won, that was Pelides' other self.

PHORKYAS.

Yet thee thy father did to Menelaus plight,
The ocean-rover bold, the house-sustainer too.

HELENA.

His daughter and with her his sceptre too he gave;
And from these nuptials sprang Hermione, my child.

PHORKYAS.

Yet whilst afar for Crete, his heritage, he fought,
Stole on thy solitude a guest was all too fair.

HELENA.

Wherefore remind me thus of that half widowhood,
And all the train of ills which had from it their birth!

PHORKYAS.

That voyage caused to me, a free-born child of Crete,
Captivity, — a doom of lifelong slavery.

HELENA.

His stewardess wert thou appointed here full soon,
With much entrusted, — house and treasure stoutly won.

PHORKYAS.

All which didst thou desert for Ilion's tower-girt town,
And for the joys of love that perish not, nor pall.

HELENA.

Speak not to me of joys! No! Anguish, bitter woe
Have 'whelmed me, heart and brain, like an unending sea!

PHORKYAS.

Yet, it is said that thou a twofold form didst wear,
In Ilion seen, and seen in Egypt too the while.

HELENA.

My weak and wandering mind confound not utterly.
Who, what I truly am, even now I cannot tell.

PHORKYAS.

And furthermore they say that from the phantom-world
Achilles rose heart-fired, and linked himself with thee!
Thee loving from of yore, despite all Fate's resolves.

HELENA.

A phantom I to him a phantom was allied.
It was a dream, the words themselves proclaim as much.
I faint away, and grow a phantom to myself.
[*Sinks into the arms of the Semi-chorus.*

CHORUS.

Silence! silence!
Thou of the evil eye,
Thou of the evil tongue!
Through lips of such ghastliness,
Grim with one tooth, what
Fell exhalations
Rise from a gulf so revolting and dread!

For the malignant that masks him in kindness,
Heart of a wolf 'neath the fleece of a sheep,
Strikes me with terror, far more than three-headed
Cerberus' throat.

Fearfully watching we stand.
When? How? Where will it burst,
The deep-brooding storm
Of a malice so vile?

And thou, too, instead of words freighted with comfort,
Tempered with kindness, and lulling as Lethe,
Summonest forth from the past recollections
Of all that is evil, ignoring the good,
Nor only the sheen of the Present
Darken'st with shadows, but also
The delicate dawn of a future,
Illumed with the sunshine of Hope.

Silence! silence!
That the soul of our mistress,
Even now in the act to take flight,
May linger, still firmly may cleave to
That form, of all forms the divinest,
Which ever the sunshine beheld.

[HÈLENA *revives, and again stands up in the midst of her attendants.*

PHORKYAS.

Forth from clouds of fleeting vapour come, this day's
resplendent sun,
Veiled, thy glories woke our rapture, dazzling now thy
radiance shines!
As the world before thee kindles, look forth thou with
gracious eyes.
Though they rail on me as hideous, what is beauty well
I know.

HELENA.

Heart-sick from the void I totter, which possessed my
swimming brain.
Oh, how gladly would I rest me, — for my limbs are
weary-sore!
Yet beseems it queens, yea, truly, it beseems all mortals
well,
With a bold and tranquil spirit to abide all threatened
ill.

PHORKYAS.

Standing in thy might before us, standing in thy beauty
there,
Tells thine eye, command befits thee. What dost thou
command me? Speak!

HELENA.

To retrieve the moments wasted in your wrangling
straight prepare!
Haste! arrange a sacrifice, as the King commanded me.

PHORKYAS.

All within the house is ready, patera, tripod, hatchet
keen,
For besprinkling, for befuming; say, what shall the
victim be?

HELENA.

That the King disclosed not.

PHORKYAS.

Spake he not of that? Oh, word of woe!

HELENA.

Why this grief, that overcomes thee?

PHORKYAS.

Queen, thou art the victim meant.

HELENA.

I?

PHORKYAS.

And these.

CHORUS.

Oh, woe and wailing!

PHORKYAS.

Thou shalt fall beneath the axe.

HELENA.

Fearful! Yet my heart foretold it!

PHORKYAS.

No escape can I descry

CHORUS.

Oh! And we! What will befall us?

PHORKYAS.

She shall die a noble death;
But upon the lofty rafter that supports the roof within,
Ye, like thrushes in the birding-time, shall flutter in a row.

[HELENA *and* CHORUS *stand astounded and horror-struck in an expressive and well-studied group.*

Poor spectres! There ye stand like images of stone,
Afeared to quit the day, the day which is not yours.
Mankind, that are no more than spectres, even as you,
Bid to the sun, like you, reluctantly farewell;
Yet prayer nor mortal might can wrest them from their doom:
All know the end must come; yet few can welcome it.
Enough! Your fate is sealed. So to the task at once!

[*Claps her hands; thereupon masked dwarfish figures appear at the portal, who actively carry into execution her orders as they are delivered.*

Approach, ye dusky, round, unsightly atomies,
Trundle yourselves along, here's mischief rare afoot.
The altar horned with gold, a place for it prepare,
Upon the silver rim the gleaming hatchet lay;
The water-pitchers fill, of them we shall have need,
To wash the pitchy gore's unsightly stains away.
Spread here upon the dust the tissued carpet fine,
That so the victim down right royally may kneel,
And coiled within its folds, head shorn from trunk, but still
With all due grace, may to the sepulchre be borne!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Absorbed in thought, apart my royal mistress stands,
Her maidens droop and blench like meadow-grass that's mown;
Yet seemeth it to me, the eldest, not unmeet

With thee to parley, that in primal eld wert born.
Experienced, sage thou art, to us seem'st well disposed,
Though yonder brainless crew assailed thee with contempt.
Then say, if chance of rescue any thou dost know.

PHORKYAS.

Not hard is that to say; but with the queen it rests
To liberate herself, and you her train with her.
But then decision lacks, and of the promptest too.

CHORUS.

Most to be revered of Parcæ, wisest of the Sibyls thou,
Folded keep the golden shears, and life and weal to us proclaim,
For we feel already wavering, swinging, dangling, undelightsome,
Our poor little limbs, that rather in the dance of yore delighted,
And in lover's soft embrace.

HELENA.

Leave these to their laments! Grief do I feel — no fear!
Yet if escape thou know'st, my gratitude be thine!
To wise far-seeing souls even the impossible
Oft possible appears. Then speak — thy plan reveal!

CHORUS.

Speak, and tell us, tell us quickly; how shall we eschew the dismal
Loathsome noose, that waits, oh, horror, like a carcanet detested,
Round our necks to coil? Already, luckless wretches, we can feel it,

Twisting, stifling, choking, if thou, Rhea, mother high
and mighty
Of the gods, relentest not.

PHORKYAS.

Have ye the patience then, in peace to list a plan
Of somewhat tedious length? Its turns are manifold.

CHORUS.

Abundant patience! So that listening we shall live.

PHORKYAS.

The man who keeps at home, guarding great store of
wealth,
And pargetting his mansion's walls from time to time,
His roof securing too against the battering rain,
With him it shall go well through length of many
days;
But he that overleaps with mad and fickle haste
His threshold's sacred bounds, nor ever stays to think,
On his return will find the ancient place, indeed,
But topsy-turvy all, even if not wholly wrecked.

HELENA.

Why these trite saws at such a time as this? Thou
wert
To tell thy tale. Stir not what only serves to gall!

PHORKYAS.

I mentioned facts. Reproach was never in my thought.
King Menelaus swept the seas from bay to bay;
Mainland and isles, on all he swooped, and spoiled
their wealth,
Which hither he brought back, and yonder is it stored

Ten tedious years before the walls of Troy he spent,
How many to come home it passeth me to tell.
But how stand matters here the while at Tyndarus'
High mansion? How with all his territories round?

HELENA.

Is sarcasm, then, in thee so thoroughly ingrained,
Thou canst not ope thy lips, unless to gibe and rail?

PHORKYAS.

Thus many a long year was the mountain-glen forlorn,
Which north from Sparta to the upper lands extends
Behind Taygetus, where rolls Eurotas down,
A merry prattling brook, and thence along our vale
Spreads out among the reeds, which shield your favourite swans.
Among the mountains there, a bold and stalwart race,
Forth issuing from Cimmerian night, their quarters fixed,
And there a tower-girt keep impregnable have reared,
From which they harry land and people when they list.

HELENA.

How could they so? That were impossible, methinks

PHORKYAS.

Most ample time they had, some twenty years, or so.

HELENA.

Is there one chief? Or a confederate robber-band?

PHORKYAS.

No robbers they, yet one they as their chief obey.
I blame him not, not I, though hither once he came.

He might have plundered all, yet was content with some
Few things, free gifts he called them, tribute not at all.

HELENA.

How looks he?

PHORKYAS.

Not amiss! Agreeable, say I.
A man he is of parts, quick-witted, handsome, bold,
Endowed with gifts of soul, like few among the Greeks.
They call the race Barbarians, yet of them, methinks,
Not one so savage is, as at beleaguered Troy
Heaps of your man-devouring heroes proved themselves.
He's truly great; myself I trusted in his hands.
And then his castle, that you for yourself should see!
Far other thing it is than that rude boulder-work,
Your ancestors, poor botchers, crudely huddled up
Like Cyclops, Cyclop fashion, rude amorphous crag
On crag amorphous heaving; there, believe me, there
Is all symmetrical, and shaped by square and rule.
Look on it from without! High up to heaven it soars,
So straight, so closely jointed, mirror-smooth as steel.
To clamber there — why even the very thought slides down.
Within, again, are halls and spacious courts, begirt
With mason-work substantial, every sort and kind.
Pilaster, pillar, arch, and spandril there you see,
Balconies, galleries, for looking out and in,
And scutcheons.

HELENA.

Scutcheons! What are scutcheons?

PHORKYAS.

Ajax bore
A wreathèd snake, yourselves have seen it, on his shield.
The Seven that 'leaguered Thebes bore carved devices too,

Each on his shield had one, of sense symbolical.
There moon and stars were seen in the great vault of heaven,
There goddess, hero, ladder, torches, swords withal,
And whatsoever else threats cities fair with doom.
Even such devices, too, our band of heroes bears,
In colours bright, from their great-grandsires handed down.
There lions, eagles, claws and beaks ye may behold,
The horns of buffaloes, wings, roses, peacocks' tails,
With bandelets of gold, black, silver, blue, and red;
Such matters, row on row, are on the walls uphung,
In never-ending halls, as spacious as the world.
Rare places these to dance!

CHORUS.

Say, be there dancers there?

PHORKYAS.

Ay, of the best! A gay and gold-locked buxom crew;
All redolent of youth! Such as was Paris, when
He came too near our queen.

HELENA.

Again thou fallest quite
Out of thy part; proceed, and bring it to a close!

PHORKYAS.

That thou shalt do, so thou pronounce a serious "Yes!"
Then with that castle straight will I surround thee.

CHORUS.

Speak
Oh, speak the little word, and save thyself and us!

HELENA.

What cause have I to fear King Menelaus should
With cruelty so fell desire to work me woe?

PHORKYAS.

Hast thou forgot how thy Deiphobus of yore,
The slaughtered Paris' brother, in unheard-of wise
He mangled, him that made thy widowhood his prey,
And rifled all thy charms; his nose and ears he slit,
And maimed him so beside, 'twas dismal to behold.

HELENA.

This to that churl he did; for my sake was it done.

PHORKYAS.

Because of that same churl he'll do the same to thee.
Beauty may not be shared; who once hath owned it all,
He sooner than participate, will end it quite.
[*Trumpets in the distance. The* CHORUS *huddle together.*
As the shrill trumpet's blast doth ear and bowels pierce
With shattering shock, even so strikes jealousy its claws
Into the bosom of the man who ne'er forgets
What on a time was his, and now is his no more.

CHORUS.

Heard'st thou not the trumpets pealing? Saw'st thou not the armour gleam?

PHORKYAS.

Welcome, welcome, Lord and Monarch, gladly I will give account!

CHORUS.

Ay, but we?

PHORKYAS.

You know full surely, you shall here her death behold.
There within your own must follow; no, there is no
help for you. [*Pause.*

HELENA.

I have resolved the course befits me to pursue.
That thou a demon art of power unblest, I feel,
And fear thou canst convert e'en good itself to ill.
Yet first of all I will go with thee to this keep;
What rests beyond I know; but what of after plans
The queen within her breast in mystery may veil,
Be undivulged to all. Now, beldam, lead the way!

CHORUS.

Oh, how gladly we go hence, with
Hurrying foot!
Behind us is Death,
Once more before us
A fortress's high
And impregnable walls.
Oh, may they shield us well,
As well as Ilion's ramparts,
Which only by grovelling cunning
At length in the dust were laid low!
[*Mists arise and conceal first the background, then the front of the scene.*
How! How is this!
Sisters, look round!
Was it not radiant day?
Trailing vapours are rising
From the sacred stream of Eurotas;

Already hath faded its beautiful
Rush-covered margin from view,
And the sportive, the gracefully haughty
Swans, that swim hither and thither,
Moving in soft undulation,
Ah, I behold them no more!

Yet, yet there
Singing I hear them,
Singing a shrill song afar!
Omen of death, says the legend,
Oh, grant that it may not betoken,
Instead of the rescue was promised,
To us, too, only destruction,
To us that are swanlike and tall,
Fair and white-throated, and ah!
To her, too, our swan-born mistress!
Woe and disaster! woe, woe!

Everything now
Around us is shrouded in mist.
Yet we see not each other! Oh, what,
What will befall? Are we moving?
Or are we hovering only
With stumbling footsteps on earth?
See'st thou nought? Is that Hermes flits yonder
Before us? Is that not his golden
Staff waving, commanding us back
To Hades, the joyless, the dusky,
That teemeth with bodiless phantoms,
O'erthronged, yet evermore void?
Yes, at once the darkness thickens, not a ray illumes the vapour,
Gray and dusky, dungeon-gloomy. Walls before our gaze are rising,
Stark before our open gaze. A courtyard is't, or yawning cavern?

Whether this or that, 'tis fearful! Sisters, sisters, we
are captives,
Captives as we were before.

[*Inner court of the Castle, surrounded by rich fantastic structures in the style of the Middle Ages.*

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Foolish and over-swift, true woman as ye are!
Dependent on the instant, sport of every gust
Of good or evil fortune, neither have ye wit
To await with even mind. One evermore gainsays
The other, and the other her with fiery heat.
In joy and woe alike you only laugh and wail.
Now silence! And await attentive what our queen's
High soul may here resolve both for herself and us.

HELENA.

Where art thou, Pythoness? Whatever be thy name,
Come forth, I say, from this grim castle's gloomy
vaults!
Mayhap thou'rt gone to tell this wondrous hero-lord
That I am here, and my reception fair bespeak.
Then take my thanks, and lead me to him with all
haste.
Oh, for a period to my wanderings! — oh, for peace!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

In vain thou look'st, oh, queen, around on every side;
The uncouth shape has vanished, or, perchance, remained
In yonder mist, from forth whose bosom we came here,
I wist not how, swiftly, yet never stirring foot.
Or else, perchance, she roams the labyrinthine maze
Of this strange castle framed of many blent in one,
Seeking fair princely greeting for us from its lord.

Yet see, above there stirs, on busy errands bent,
At casements, and through corridors and portals wide,
A throng of servants, moving swiftly to and fro.
Reception cordial this, and courteous doth portend.

CHORUS.

My heart bounds within me! Oh, only look yonder,
How gracefully downwards, with hurrying footsteps,
Yon bevy of loveliest youths are advancing
In measured array! By whose order, I marvel,
Appear they thus early, all decked in their trim,
This glorious muster of beautiful youths?
What most claims my wonder? Their bearing so graceful,
The tresses that curl round their foreheads of snow,
Or the bloom of their cheeks that outrival the peach,
And are clothed like the peach with a delicate down?
Full fain would I bite, did I shrink not with fear,
For lips that aforetime such morsel attempted,
Oh, fearful to think on, with ashes were filled!

But lo! now the fairest
Approach to our feet.
What is it they bear?
Steps for a throne.
Carpets and seat,
Curtain and hangings,
In tent-like array,
Like clouds interlacing,
That circle and wave o'er
The head of our queen:
For already hath she
On their invitation
Ascended the gorgeous throne.
Forward! And round her,
Stepping in measure,
Range in a row!

Worthy, oh, worthy, trebly worthy,
Be blest such a welcome as this!

[*After the pages and squires have descended in long procession,* FAUST *appears at the top of the staircase in a knight's court-dress of the Middle Ages, and descends slowly and with dignity.*

PANTHALIS (*regarding him attentively*).

If that the gods have not, as ofttimes they have done,
For but some little space, a form of wondrous mould,
A gracious presence, and an air of lofty grace,
Unto this mortal lent, he will be prosperous
In all that he essays, — or battling, man with man,
Or in that puny war with beauteous woman waged;
In sooth to all men else he is superior far,
However dear to fame, whom e'er mine eyes beheld.
Majestical and slow, with reverential air,
The prince approaches; turn, and greet him, oh, my queen!

FAUST (*advances with a man in chains at his side*).

Instead of stateliest greeting, as were meet,
Instead of reverent welcome, lo, I bring,
In gyves fast bound, a varlet who, remiss
Himself, hath made me fail in duty too.
Kneel down, and here at this sweet lady's feet
Lay the confession of thy heavy guilt.
This, oh, most puissant empress, is the man
Of lynx-keen eye, appointed to keep watch
Upon our topmost turret, thence to scan
The canopy of heaven, the earth's expanse,
And note whate'er is to be noted there, —
What from the mountains to our castle here
May cross the valley, be they jostling herds,

Or banded hosts in arms; we guard the one,
The other we oppose. To-day, oh, shame!
He noted not thy coming; so there lacks
The welcome stately, and the homage due
To guest so noble. Forfeit is his life,
A double forfeit; he had lain ere this
In his most guilty blood, but only thou
Mayst punish or forgive, as likes thee best.

HELENA.

The lofty honour thou accordest me,
As judge and mistress absolute, belike
Is meant to test how far I dare presume.
Thus, then, the judge's foremost duty I
Will exercise, and hear the culprit! Speak!

LYNCEUS, THE TOWER-WATCHER.

Let me kneel, and let me view thee,
Live or die, I reck not how!
For, oh, godlike woman, to thee
All my soul is bondslave now.

Watching for the morning's blushing,
Looking eastward, where it glows,
All at once with magic flushing
In the south the sun arose.

To itself my gaze it rooted;
Rocky pass, and valley green,
Earth and heaven, were all unnoted,
All save her, that peerless queen.

I with eyesight keen am dowered,
Keen as any lynx on tree,
But in vain I strove, o'erpowered
By that vision fair to see.

What to me portcullised gateway,
What if roof or tower be kept?
Mists arise, fade off, and straightway
Forth a radiant goddess stept!

Eye and soul I straight surrender,
Drinking in the blissful light;
Dazzling all, her beauty's splendour
Dazzles me, poor minion, quite!

I forgot the warder's duty,
Quite forgot the trumpet call;
Menace, yet oh, spare me! Beauty
Holds all angry thought in thrall

HELENA.

The evil to chastise myself have caused
Were most unmeet. Woe's me, what ruthless fate
Pursues me, that where'er I go I thus
Befool men's senses, so they not respect
Themselves, nor aught that's worthy! Now by force,
Now by seductive arts, by warfare now,
Now dragging me about from land to land,
Gods, heroes, demigods, yea, demons too,
Have made my life one wild and errant maze.
I sowed confusion o'er the world; — it grew,
And now it spreads, confounded worse and worse.
Remove this worthy man and set him free;
Light never harm on him the gods have crazed.

FAUST.

Lost in amazement I behold, oh, queen,
The smiter and the smitten here together.
I see the bow that sped the arrow forth,
And him it struck. Shaft follows thick on shaft,

And me they pierce. Methinks, they seem to whizz
Around in hall and tower on every hand.
What am I now? Thou in a moment mak'st
My trustiest vassals rebels, insecure
My very walls; so now I fear my hosts
Obey the conquering and unconquered fair.
What's left me then, save to resign to thee
Myself and all I fondly dreamed was mine.
Here let me at thy feet, thy liegeman true,
Proclaim thee queen, whose presence, only seen,
Won thee at once my throne and its domains.

LYNCEUS (*returns with a chest, followed by men carrying other chests*).

See me, once more, oh, queen, advance!
The rich man begs one little glance;
He looks on thee, and feels, be sure,
As monarch rich, as beggar poor.

What was I erst? What am I now?
What shall I do or wish or vow?
What boots the eye's most piercing ken?
Back from thy throne it shrinks again.

Out from the East our course we pressed,
And soon were masters of the West;
A throng of warriors long and vast,
The first knew nothing of the last.

The first was slain, the second stood,
The third struck in, a spearman good;
And still their numbers waxed amain,
Unnoted were the myriads slain.

We rushed, we crushed, we stormed apace,
We were the lords from place to place;

And where to-day I bore control,
Ere morn another sacked and stole.

We looked, and rapid was the look,
And one the fairest damsel took,
Another seized the sturdy steer,
The horses all were lifted clear.

But I in peering took delight,
For all that rarest is to sight,
And what another's too might be
Was only withered grass to me.

I tracked where treasures lay concealed,
And all my piercing glance revealed;
To all recesses I could spy,
No coffers might exclude mine eye.

And heaps of gold were piled by me.
And gems most glorious to see,
But none of all were fit to shine,
Save emerald, on that breast of thine.

Then o'er thy brow let pearlins strung,
The spoil of ocean's caves, be hung;
The ruby's fire grows faint and weak
Beside the crimson of thy cheek.

And so these treasures rich and rare
Unto thy throne I proudly bear,
And at thy feet the harvest lay
Of many a long and bloody fray.

And many though these coffers be,
Yet coffers many more have we;
Deign but to speak thy gracious will,
And treasure vaults for thee I'll fill.

For scarce dost thou the throne ascend,
When instantly in homage bend
Our reason, wealth, and all that's ours,
Before thy beauty's matchless powers.

All this I deemed securely mine,
But now surrender, it is thine, —
All this high-worthy once I thought,
But now I see that it was nought.

What I possessed away hath flown,
Like withered grass that hath been mown.
Oh, with one gracious look restore
The virtue that it owned before!

FAUST.

Hence with the burden by your valour won,
Unchid indeed, but unrewarded too!
Already hers is all this castle holds,
'Tis bootless to present particular gifts.
Away! And pile in orderly array
Treasure on treasure! Rear a structure grand
Of pomp till now unseen! Let every arch
Shine like the heavens at morning-break! Create
From lifeless life a paradise around!
Let carpet heaped on carpet, thick with flowers,
Unroll before her; all that meets her tread
Be delicate, and splendours so divine,
Might dazzle all but gods, allure her eye!

LYNCEUS.

Poor and trivial is at best
This our gracious lord's behest:
Greeting such to work for thee
Will the servant's pastime be;

For our life and goods and all
Thy resistless charms enthrall.
Is not every warrior tame,
Every falchion blunt and lame?
Near that form of glorious mould,
Even the sun is dull and cold;
Near the wonders of that face
All is drear, and all is base. [*Exit.*

HELENA (*to* FAUST).

I would hold converse with thee; — come thou up,
And sit here by my side! The vacant place
Invites its master, and secures me mine.

FAUST.

First, kneeling, noble lady, let me crave
Thy grace for my true homage; let me kiss
The hand which thus would raise me to thy side.
Confirm me as co-regent with thyself
Of realms whose bounds were never scanned, and win
Adorer, vassal, guardian all in one!

HELENA.

Marvels so many do I see, and hear,
I'm all amaze, and fain would question much.
Prithee resolve me, wherefore rang the speech
Of yonder man so strangely, — strange, yet sweet?
Each tone into the other seems to fit,
And, when one word is wedded to the ear,
A second comes to dally with the first.

FAUST.

If that our people's speech delight thee, how
Their song will ravish, through their inmost depths
Steeping thine ear and spirit in content!

To make it ours, let us this art essay;
Converse invites, and calls it into play.

HELENA.

Say, how to words such grace I may impart?

FAUST.

'Tis easy; they must flow out from the heart.
And, when the soul is touched with passion's flame,
We look around and ask —

HELENA.

Who burns the same?

FAUST.

Nor past nor future now the soul employ,
The present only —

HELENA.

Constitutes our joy.

FAUST.

'Tis treasure, glorious gain, supreme command.
Who gives it confirmation?

HELENA.

This — my hand.

CHORUS.

Who shall taunt our mistress, that she
To this castle's lord demeans her
With a loving grace?
For what are we, every one,

What but captives, now and ofttime,
Since Troy's shameful overthrow,
And our labyrinthine roamings
Thence in woful wise?

Women with men's love familiar
Dally never in their choice,
In such lore proficient;
And as to golden-locked shepherds,
It may be, to black-bearded fauns
They, as it haps for the moment,
Over their delicate limbs
The self-same privilege yield.

Near and nearer already they sit,
Each on the other reclining,
Shoulder to shoulder, knee to knee;
Hand in hand they are swaying
Over the throne's
Deep-cushioned lordliness.
No scruple hath royalty, thus
Its secret delights
To the gaze of the people
With never a blush to reveal.

HELENA.

I feel so far away, and yet so near,
And oh! how gladly say — Here am I — here.

FAUST.

Scarce do I breathe. I tremble, heart and knee;
'Tis all a dream. Time, place, have ceased to be.

HELENA.

Meseems as I had lived in olden time,
And yet were now new-budding in my prime;

Inwoven with thine my being seems to be,
Bound to thy stranger life eternally.

FAUST.

Oh, ponder not! To quaff the present bliss,
Though death were at the gate, our duty is.

PHORKYAS (*running in*).

Prattle in Love's alphabet,
Billing, cooing, toying — yet
Time it is aside were set
All such childish gear.
Feel ye not the tempest louring?
Hark the trumpet's bray! O'erpowering
Ruin draweth near.
Menelaus, with his bands,
Storming at your portal stands.
Arm for conflict drear!
By these victors girdled, you
Like maimed Deiphobus shall rue
Your bondage to the sex.
These light goods shall swing in halter,
And for her upon the altar
Lies the new-ground axe!

FAUST.

Accurst intrusion! Most unseasonable now!
Not even in peril can I senseless brawling brook.
Ill favour from ill news the goodliest bearer takes;
And these, vile hag! alone 'tis thy delight to bear.
Yet shall they stead thee nothing here; — with empty breath
Thou dost assail the air. No peril, none, is here,
And peril's self would seem but idle threat, — no more.

[*Signals, explosions from the turrets, trumpets and horns, warlike music. A mighty host marches across the stage.*

No! Straightway thou a throng of lances,
Each by a hero borne, shalt see;
He only merits woman's glances,
Who can protect her valiantly.
[*To the leaders, who detach themselves from the columns, and advance toward him.*

With fiery, yet self-reinèd power,
That makes your victory sure, go forth,
Ye of the East the prime and flower,
Ye budding blossoms of the North.

In steel encased, where'er they enter,
Empire on empire up they break,
They come, earth trembles to her centre,
They pass, and thunders fill their wake.

It was at Pylos that we landed,
The aged Nestor was no more!
And all the petty kinglets banded
Our dauntless host to ruin bore.

Now from these walls with force of thunder
Drive Menelaus back to sea!
There let him rove, and sack, and plunder,
Such was his choice and destiny!

Dukes shall I hail you, — grace's fountain,
Great Sparta's queen hath so decreed;
Now at her feet lay vale and mountain,
And you shall have a realm for meed.

With rampart piled, and high-banked galleys,
Thou, German, Corinth's bays defend!
Achaia with its hundred valleys
I to thy keeping, Goth, commend.

To Elis let the Franks betake them,
The Saxon make Messene his,
Lords of the sea the Normans make them,
And raise to glory Argolis!

Then each, in joy at home abiding,
Shall wield an honoured rule abroad,
Yet Sparta shall, o'er all presiding,
Be, as of yore, our queen's abode!

For each and all in long endurance
One general weal is thus in store;
At *her* feet shall ye seek assurance,
And light and justice evermore.
[FAUST *descends, the princes form a circle round him to receive his instructions and commands.*

CHORUS.

The man, who the Fairest would win and keep,
Foremost of all should see
That of weapons he has good store.
Though by fond arts he should make his own
What upon earth is the prize supreme,
Yet he possesseth it not in peace.
Fawning and flattery lure her from him,
Reivers audaciously snatch her away.
Against such wrong let him well provide!

Therefore do I our prince extol.
Prize him more highly than all men else,
Prudence with valour commingling so
That stalwart vassals submissive stand,
Watching his every nod.
Faithfully they his behests fulfil,
And each his proper advantage finds,
They in their master's liberal guerdon,
Both in achievement of loftiest fame.

For who shall ravish her now
From her potent possessor?
To him she belongs, — to him we resign her;
Resign her with twofold good-will, for he
With her hath encompassed ourselves,
Within, with impregnable walls,
And with an invincible host, without.

FAUST.

The gifts we here on these amass,
To each a goodly kingdom's thrall,
Are great and glorious. Let them pass!
We hold our station 'midst them all.

With emulous pride they'll guard thee round,
Half-island, girdled by the main,
To Europe's mountain-ridges bound
By hills inwoven in slender chain.

Oh, may this land, of all the fairest,
From age to age be ever blest!
'Tis thine, my queen! Again thou bearest
The sway by thee of yore possessed.

When from the shell thou burst resplendent
Amidst Eurotas' sedges green,
Thy mother and her maids attendant
Were dazzled by the radiant sheen.

This glorious land, intent to woo thee,
With all its treasures courts thy hand;
Though all earth's round pertaineth to thee,
Oh, tarry with thy fatherland!

And though the sunbeams coldly play, and drearly,
Upon its jaggèd mountain-summits frore,

Though 'midst the green the rocks peer forth austerely,
Where nibbling goats collect their scanty store,

Yet mingling brooklets brawl, and welling fountains
And dell and slope and meadow, green are they,
And o'er the verdure of a hundred mountains
We see the fleecy herds far spreading stray;

See by the beetling cliffs the cattle marching,
With measured pace and wary, one by one;
Yet doth the rock, in hundred caverns arching,
From tempest yield them shelter or from sun.

Pan shields them there, and there, from moss-clefts peering,
And boskage cool and dewy, wood-nymphs be,
And high in air their struggling branches rearing,
As for the sun athirst, crowds tree on tree.

Primeval woods! The oak, in strength excelling,
In jags and knots its gnarlèd boughs distorts;
The gentle maple, with sweet juices swelling,
Sweeps far aloft, and with its burden sports.

And milk in still and shady pastures floweth
For child or lamb, maternal drink to them,
And fruit hard by, the plains' ripe bounty, groweth,
And honey trickles from the hollowed stem.

Here cloudless bliss, from sire to son descending,
Makes cheek and lip alike serene and clear,
Each owneth in his sphere a life unending,
And health and sweet content dwell ever here.

And so, to all its father's strength expanding,
The infant grows beneath the pure bright day,

And at the sight amazed we pause, demanding
If these be gods, or men of mortal clay.

Thus 'mong the shepherds seemed the young Apollo
A shepherd, only than the rest more fair,
For all created things one impulse follow,
Where Nature doth untrammelled empire bear.
[*Sits down beside* HELENA.

So thou and I, our souls from bondage freeing,
Shall dwell in peace, the past behind us thrown;
Oh, feel, 'twas Jove supreme that gave thee being;
Thou 'longst to earth's first golden age alone.

Thou shall not be bound in by rock-built towers!
Still in immortal youth Arcadia smiles
For us, and o'er us spreads her blissful bowers,
Here neighbouring close on Sparta's household piles.

O'er this thrice happy land to reign its queen would
Earth's brightest destiny to thee ensure!
Now be these thrones transformed to arching green-
wood,
And free our joys as Arcady's and pure!
[*The scene is entirely changed. A range of grottoes abuts upon arbours thickly covered with leaves. A shady grove extends to the base of the rocks which enclose the place.* FAUST *and* HELENA *are not seen. The* CHORUS *lying asleep, dispersed up and down.*

PHORKYAS.

How long these maidens here have slept, I cannot tell,
Or in their dreams if they have seen what I beheld
Before my waking eyes, as little do I know.
I'll wake them, therefore. These young folks shall be
amazed;

You, too, ye bearded ones, that sit beneath and wait,
To these strange goings-on in hopes to find the clue.
Up, up! Arise, and shake your tresses from your brows,
And slumber from your eyes! Blink not, but list to me!

CHORUS.

Only speak! Say on, and tell us all the marvels thou hast witnessed,
Gladliest would we list to legends that would sorest tax our credence;
For our souls are very weary, gazing on these rocks around.

PHORKYAS.

How! Already weary, children, though you scarce have rubbed your eyes?
Hearken then! Within these caverns, grots, and leafy bowers umbrageous,
To our lord and to our lady, as to two Idyllic lovers,
Shield and shelter have been granted.

CHORUS.

How! Within there?

PHORKYAS.

Yes — Sequestered
From the world, to secret tendance me and me alone they summoned.
Highly honoured stood I near them; yet, as confidante beseemeth,
I looked round at other matters; hither, thither I betook me,
Culling mosses, roots, and barks, in all their properties conversant,
So that they were left alone.

CHORUS.

Thou wouldst have us think, that in there quite a little world is hidden,
Wood and meadow, lake and river! Pretty fables thou dost weave!

PHORKYAS.

Simple sooth, ye inexperienced! There be depths were never trodden:
Halls on halls, and courts on courts, enwrapt in musings deep I traversed,
When at once a peal of laughter echoed through the vaults cavernous.
I look in, a boy is bounding from a woman to a man,
From his father to his mother; the caressing and the fondling,
All love's silly play and banter, shouts of glee and sportive babbling,
Interchanging stun me quite.
He, a wingless genius, naked, faun-like save in what is bestial,
To the solid earth leaps down, but straight the earth reverberating,
Up into the ether shoots him, till thus, twice or thrice rebounding,
He has touched the arching roof.
Full of terror calls the mother, "Bound as much as e'er thou willest,
But forbear to think of flying, — flying is to thee forbid."
And the faithful father counsels, — "In the earth the power abideth,
That impels thee upwards. — Only with thy tiptoe touch its surface,
Like the son of Earth, Antæus, straightway is thy strength renewed."

So along the rocky ledges bounds he on from peak to ridge,
Hither, thither, back and forward, like a stricken ball in play!
But at once within the fissure of a chasm he sank and vanished,
And it seemed as we had lost him; mother moaneth, sire consoleth,
I my shoulders shrugged in fear. When lo! again! what vision wondrous!
Treasures, were they hidden yonder? Garments, all with flowers embroidered,
He with seemly grace hath donned.
Tassels dangle from his elbows, bow-knots flutter on his bosom,
In his hand the golden lyre, quite a little Phœbus, gaily
To the edge of the o'erhanging rock he stepped; we stood astonished,
And his parents fell in raptures into one another's arms.
For about his brows what radiance! What gleams there is hard to tell.
Is it burnished gem, or is it flame of lordly might of soul?
And his port is high and noble, even as boy himself proclaiming
Lord to be of all that's lovely, whom the melodies eternal
Permeate through every fibre; and so ye anon shall hear him,
And so ye shall see him, and be in especial wonder wrapt!

CHORUS.

Call'st thou this marvellous,
Daughter of Creta?
Has never thine ear been lulled by
The beautiful lore of the poets?

Hast thou heard never Ionia's,
Never been tutored in Hellas's
Legends primæval, that teem with
Achievements of heroes and gods?

All that befalleth in these
Our days is only an echo,
Wailing and sad, of the glorious
Days of our far-away sires.
Not to compare is thy tale with
That which beautiful Fiction,
Than Truth more welcome to credence,
Hath chanted of Maia's son.

This gracefully moulded, yet lusty
Nursling, just newly begotten,
His bevy of gossiping nurses
Fold in pure fleecy swaddlings,
Deck with the richest adornings,
In their irrational way.
Sturdily, featly, however, the rogue
Slippeth his flexible
Body elastic
Out from the folds,
Craftily leaving the vesture of purple
That round him close was encinctured,
Quietly there in his stead,
Like the consummated butterfly,
Which, from the chrysalis torpid
Its pinions untrammelling, soareth,
Boldly at wild will careering
Through air all aglow with the sun.

So he, too, the lissomest, nimblest,
That he to thieves and to cozeners,
Yea, to all that on profit are bent,
The favouring genius would be,

Instantly proved by the practice
Of all the most dexterous arts.
Straight from the monarch of ocean he filches
His trident, yea, even from Ares
His falchion purloins from its sheath,
His arrows and bow from Apollo,
And eke from Hephæstos his pincers;
Even Jove's, the dread father's, own bolts he
Had ta'en, had the flashes not scared him;
Eros himself in the grapple
Of limbs interlacing he threw,
And from Cypria's bosom the Cestus,
The while she caressed him, he stole.

[*A delightful strain of pure melody, as if from a lyre, is heard from the cavern; all are arrested by the sound, and appear thrilled to the soul. From this point to the pause, which is noted below, the progress of the scene is accompanied by a full band.*

PHORKYAS.

Hark, the glorious tones! In fable
Old and faded trust no more!
Your old throng of gods unstable,
Let them pass, their reign is o'er!

Men again shall know them never,
Higher faith their souls must fill;
From the heart must well whatever
Is upon the heart to thrill.

[*Retires toward the cliffs.*

CHORUS.

If, dread being, these soft-soothing
Strains can thus incline thine ears,
They create fresh-budding youth in
Us, dissolved in sweetest tears.

What though heaven's great sun be clouded,
So within our soul it live?
In our own hearts lies enshrouded
More than all the world can give.

HELENA, FAUST, EUPHORION *in the costume above described.*

EUPHORION.

Children's tones, their carols singing,
Seem your own mirth's voice to be;
Seeing me in cadence springing,
Leaps your heart in tune with me.

HELENA.

Mortal life with bliss to flavour
Love links Two in union sweet,
But, that it of heaven may savour,
Makes with Three the bond complete.

FAUST.

Thus is all we longed for ended,
I am thine, and mine art thou;
And our beings so are blended,
May we ever be as now!

CHORUS.

For this pair long years of pleasure
In this fair and gracious boy
Gathered are in golden measure;
In their union how I joy!

EUPHORION.

Now let me gambol,
Now let me spring!

Up to yon cloudland
I would take wing, —
I would be soaring
Aloft on the gale.

FAUST.

Oh, from these frantic
Flights let me call thee,
Lest misadventure
And ruin befall thee,
And our own darling
Plunge us in wail!

EUPHORION.

Earth shall not fetter me
Longer from air.
Let go my hands now,
Let go my hair,
Let go my garments,
They're mine — let me free!

HELENA.

Think, oh, bethink thee,
To whom thou belongest, —
Think how thou grievest us,
Grievest and wrongest,
Bursting the bond unites
Him, thee, and me!

CHORUS.

Soon sundered, I fear me,
The union will be.

FAUST *and* HELENA.

For our love, who adore thee,
Restrain, oh, my child,
Restrain, we implore thee,
These impulses wild!
Orderly, tranquilly,
Trip o'er the plain.

EUPHORION.

But to content ye,
Will I refrain.
[*Winding in and out among the* CHORUS, *and compelling them to dance with him.*
Cheerily I foot it
Through this bevy bright!
Does the measure suit it?
Is the motion right?

HELENA.

Yes, 'tis bravely footed. Twine
With these comely maidens mine
In the roundel gay!

FAUST.

Would the end were come! Oh, me!
All this madcap revelry
Fills me with dismay.
[EUPHORION *and* CHORUS, *dancing and singing move about in interlacing roundels.*

CHORUS.

When thou thine arms in air
Gracefully crossest;
When thou thy sunny hair
Dancest and tossest;

When trips thy foot so light
Over the meadow bright;
When thy limbs come and go
Lightsomely to and fro, —
Then thou thy goal hast gained,
Beautiful boy!
All hearts, to thee enchained,
Make thee their joy. [*Pause.*

EUPHORION.

Hinds ye resemble,
That frolic and speed,
Sportive and nimble,
Over the mead;
I am the huntsman,
Ye are the game.

CHORUS.

Wouldst thou o'ertake us,
Make but the trial,
Blest would it make us —
Vain were denial —
Might we but fondle
Thy beautiful frame!

EUPHORION.

Now o'er brake and bramble,
Rock and thicket ramble!
What's easy of capture, it
Liketh not me;
To give me true rapture, it
Fought for must be.

HELENA *and* FAUST.

What waywardness! What mad caprices!
Nought his headlong course can rein!

Hark! Can these be hunting horns,
Ringing over wood and plain?
Shrieks! and still the din increases!

CHORUS (*running in one by one*).

Shooting past us like the breezes,
Daffing us aside in scorn,
He our wildest sister seizes,
And by him she's hither borne.

EUPHORION (*enters, carrying a young girl in his arms*).

Here I bring the maiden coy,
To enforce my hard-won joy;
Now to make me fully blest,
Thus I clasp her struggling breast,
Kiss her shrinking lips that she
Both my power and will may see.

GIRL.

Let me go! This frame of mine, too,
Holds a spirit bold and strong,
But it is not swept, like thine, too
Lightly by each gust along.
So! thou think'st thou hast me fairly!
Think'st thine arm has fixed its prey!
Hold me fast, fond boy, and rarely
I will scorch thee for my play.
[*She flames up and vanishes into air.*
Follow me to realms supernal,
Follow me to caves infernal,
Win the prize, if win you may!

EUPHORION (*shaking off the last of the flames*).

Forest brake and greenwood tree
Stifle here, by crags o'erhung;

Are they to fetter me?
I am lusty yet, and young.
Yonder the wild wind raves,
Thundering roll the waves;
Both afar I hear them,
Would I were near them!
[*He continues to spring upwards from rock to rock.*

HELENA, FAUST, *and* CHORUS.

Wouldst thou match the mountain goat?
We are thrilled for fear of thee.

EUPHORION.

Ever higher must I float,
Ever farther must I see.
Now where I am, I know;
There lie the isles below.
Yes, yes, I am in
The midst of the land
Of Pelops, akin
To both ocean and strand.

CHORUS.

If rock and forest wold
Cannot allure thee,
Apples with cheeks of gold
We shall ensure thee,
Figs, and, in alleys spanned,
Vines on the mountain-side.
Oh, in this darling land,
Darling, abide!

EUPHORION.

Dream ye of peace's day?
Dream on who may!

War is the signal-cry,
Conquer or die!

CHORUS.

Who in peace would rekindle
War's terrible flame,
Shall see his hopes dwindle
In sorrow and shame.

EUPHORION.

All whom this soil in peril bore
To bear their part in perils more,
With spirits soaring and unslavish,
Of their own blood like water lavish,
All who shall battle with a soul
Illumined by a heaven-sent ray,
Which nought can quench and nought control,
A glorious guerdon win shall they!

CHORUS.

He mounts, he mounts! Yet in the farness
He shows undwindled to our gaze,
Like conqueror in battle harness,
And all in brass and steel ablaze.

EUPHORION.

Let not wall nor moat environ,
Each in self alone repose,
Ever is man's breast of iron
Surest stronghold 'gainst his foes.
Would ye live unvanquished ever,
Onwards to the battle-field,
Amazons your women, never
Child but bears a hero's shield!

CHORUS.

Oh, sacred poesy,
Heavenward thy soaring be!
Shine on, thou brightest star,
Afar, and still more afar,
Yet doth thy glorious strain
Visit us still, and fain
To hail it we are.

EUPHORION.

No, not like child's shall be my bearing;
The youth appears in armour dight,
Peer for the free, the strong, the daring,
His spirit braced to do the right.
Forth fare!
For there
The path to glory opens bright.

HELENA *and* FAUST.

Ushered scarce to life and gladness,
Scarce to day's resplendent beam,
Thou dost rush with giddy madness
Where dismay and danger teem.
Are then we
Nought to thee,
Is our gracious bond a dream?

EUPHORION.

Hark, hark, what thunder on the ocean?
Its echoes roll from dale to dale,
Host grappling host in fierce commotion,
Dust, tempest, war, and woe, and wail!
Death our doom,
Not with gloom,
But with welcome let us hail.

HELENA, FAUST, *and* CHORUS.

Oh, what horror! Agonising!
Is then death *thy* doom? Despair!

EUPHORION.

Should I hold back unsympathising?
No, every pang and grief I'll share.

HELENA, FAUST, *and* CHORUS.

Wilfulness peril brings,
Death-laden harms.

EUPHORION.

Ha! And a pair of wings
Shoots from my arms.
Away! I must venture thus!
Lift me in air!

[*He casts himself into the air, his garments support him for a moment; an aureola surrounds his head, and a train of light follows him.*

CHORUS.

Icarus! Icarus!
Woe and despair!

[*A beautiful youth falls at the parents' feet, and you think that in the dead young man you recognise a familiar form; when all at once the material part of his frame disappears, the aureola mounts to heaven like a comet, while the dress, mantle, and lyre remain upon the ground.*

HELENA *and* FAUST.

Soon mirth into anguish fades,
Joy into moan!

EUPHORION'S *voice from beneath.*

Let me not, mother, to the Shades
Descend alone! [*Pause.*

CHORUS. (*Dirge.*)

Not alone! Where'er thou bidest;
For to know thee still we trust.
Ah, though from the day thou glidest,
Hearts, that loved thee, ever must.
Dirges none we'll sing in sadness,
Enviously we chant thy fate!
Still thy song in grief or gladness,
Like thy soul, was fair and great.

Born to earthly bliss, most rarely
Gifted, of a race sublime,
Yet, alas! thy soul too early
Dropped its blossoms in their prime.
Thine a vision was divine, too,
Thine a heart that felt for all,
Noblest women's love was thine, too,
And a song most magical.

Yet didst thou in wild defiance,
Swayed by wayward impulse still,
Spurn at rule, and all compliance
With the laws that curb the will.
But thy higher soul, victorious,
Burst the bonds of passion through!
Thou didst seek the greatly glorious,
But couldst not attain it too.

Ah, who *does?* Forlorn inquiry,
That from fate wrings no reply,
When, on their day of anguish fiery,
The nations mute and gory lie.

Yet sing new songs in jocund measure,
And droop, in sorrow sunk, no more!
For earth again will these untreasure,
As she hath ever done of yore.
[*Full pause. The music ceases.*

HELENA (*to* FAUST).

An ancient saw, alas! approves itself in me —
That Bliss and Beauty ne'er enduringly are twined.
The bond of life is riven, and riven the bond of love;
Bewailing both I say a bitter-sad farewell!
And fling myself once more, yet once, into your arms.
Persephoneia, now receive my boy and me!
[*She embraces* FAUST, *her corporeal part vanishes, her dress and veil remain in his arms.*

PHORKYAS (*to* FAUST).

Hold fast by all the residue is left,
Let not the dress escape thee! Even now
Tug demons at its skirts, would sweep it fain
Off to the world below. Hold fast, I say!
'Tis not indeed the goddess thou hast lost,
Yet is the thing divine. Turn to account
Its priceless virtue, and ascend in air;
Swift o'er all common things 'twill bear thee on,
Wafted on ether, long as thou canst fly.
We meet again, far, very far from here.
[HELEN'S *garments dissolve into clouds, envelop* FAUST, *lift him into the air, and move away with him.*

PHORKYAS (*lifts up* EUPHORION'S *dress, mantle, and lyre, steps into the proscenium, and, holding up the exuviæ, says*)

Rare treasure-trove are these to view.
The flame has disappeared, 'tis true,

Yet is the world no whit the worse;
Here is enough to consecrate
A legion of the sons of verse,
To scatter envy, malice, hate
Amongst the poetaster crew;
And if to give them genius, too,
Surpass my power, at least confess,
I can supply them with the dress.
[*She sits down upon the proscenium, leaning against the base of a column.*

PANTHALIS.

Bestir ye, girls! At length we from the spell are free,
The old Thessalian hag's weird sorceries are o'er,
The jargon ceased of yonder intertangled tones,
That did the ear, and, worse, the inner sense confound.
To Hades now away! Our queen has hurried there
With sorrow-saddened tread. Let us, her faithful maids,
Where she has led the way, attend upon her path.
We'll find her at the throne of the Inscrutable.

CHORUS.

Queens, right royal, allwheres are they!
Even in Hades they fill the high places,
Haughtily with their peers consorting,
With Persephone mating as friends;
But we, in the far-away distance
Of slumbrous asphodel meadows,
Mated with long scraggy poplars,
With barren unbeautiful willows,
What pastime is ours or what pleasure?
Bat-like to pipe and to whistle,
Ungladsome, and ghost-like, and drear?

PANTHALIS.

Who hath nor fame achieved, nor nobly doth aspire,
Belongs but to the elements; so get ye gone!
My spirit burns to be with my dear queen once more;
'Tis not desert alone, but loyalty as well,
Perpetuates for us the individual life. [*Exit.*

ALL.

Back to the daylight given are we;
Persons, in sooth, no more,
We feel and we know it well,
But to Hades we never return.
Nature, the evermore-living,
Asserts on us spirits, as we do
On her, unimpeachable claim.

A PORTION OF THE CHORUS.

In the whispering thrill, the breezy waving of these thousand branches,
From the roots by soft endearments we shall woo life's flowing currents,
Up into the boughs; and soon with foliage, soon with teeming blossoms,
Decked profusely, shake our flowing tresses to the amourous breeze.
Falls the fruit, anon assemble swains and herds in throngs exulting,
Pressing, crowding swift and eager, of our bounties to possess them,
And they all bow down before us, as before the primal gods.

ANOTHER PORTION.

Floating o'er the polished mirror of these rocky walls far-gleaming,
Moving in soft undulations, we caressingly shall glide;

There to every sound we'll hearken, song of birds, or
shepherd's pipings;
If Pan's voice tremendous ringeth, straight we send an
answer back;
Rustling zephyrs we reëcho, — thunders it, we roll our
thunders,
Till the peals with doubling crash reverberate along
the hills.

A THIRD PORTION.

Sisters! Of more mobile spirit, onwards with the
brooks we hasten;
For the richly garnished ridges of yon distant moun-
tains lure us;
Downwards ever, ever downwards, we meandering shall
water
Now the uplands, now the meadows, now the garden
round the house.
There across the landscape, skyward soaring, the long
tapering summits
Of the cypress mark where flows our crystal mirror
'twixt its banks.

A FOURTH PORTION.

Ye may roam where'er it lists you; we shall circle, we
shall murmur,
Round yon planted hill, where greenly on the vine-
stock grows the vine;
There from hour to hour the toil of him that with a
feverish passion,
Fearful for his labour's issues, trims the tendrils we
shall note.
Now with hoe, and now with shovel, earthing now,
now pruning, binding,
All the gods he sends up prayers to, to the sun-god,
chief of all.

Bacchus, listless dreamer, little recks he of his faithful vassal.
He in leafy cave reclineth, toying with the youngest Faun.
All that for the half-awakings of his fumy dreams he lacketh
Lies in leathern skins, and earthen crocks and pitchers stored already,
From the ancient days eternal, right and left his grotto cool.
But when all the gods combining, Helios still of all the chiefest,
Airing, moistening, warming, firing, have the plumpy berries filled,
Where the dresser worked in silence, straightway all is life and bustle,
Voices ring from every alley, ring along from stake to stake;
Baskets patter, pitchers clatter, butt and waggon groaning stagger
Onwards to the mighty wine-press, to the pressers' sturdy tread;
And the sacred fulness of the purely nurtured juicy berries
Is profanely crushed; it mingles, foaming, seething, loathly squashed.
And now peals the cymbal, mingling with the beaker's brazen clangour,
For the mighty Dionysos hath his awful front unveiled;
Forth with cloven-footed Satyrs, and with reeling Bacchants comes he;
And, amid the din, incessant brays Silenus' long-eared beast!
Nought is spared! By cloven clutches trodden down is all decorum;
All the senses whirling madly, hideous din the ear confounds.

Tipsily they grope for goblets, heads and paunches both
o'er-laden;
Here and there some look dejected, still they swell
the tumult higher;
For, the new-made must to garner, out they drain the
wine-skin old! [*The curtain falls.*

PHORKYAS *in the proscenium rises to a gigantic height, descends from the cothurnus, lifts back the mask and veil, and discovers herself to be* MEPHISTOPHELES, *in order, so far as necessary, to comment on the piece by way of epilogue.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *A high mountainous region. Strong, jagged, rocky peaks.*

A cloud comes sweeping across the peaks, and settles upon a projecting plateau. It divides, and FAUST *advances.*

FAUST.

Down-gazing on the lonely depths beneath my feet,
I on this high-peaked ridge have purposely stepped
forth,
Leaving my cloudy car behind, that bore me well
Through days of sunshine over land and sea:
Slowly, but still compact, it draws from me away,
Trailing in volumed folds along towards the East.
The eye, in admiration lost, strains after it:
It parts, in wavelike motion swayed from change to
change,
Yet working into shape the while. What's this I see?
On sun-illumined cushions statelily reclined,
Of more than mortal size, a godlike woman's form!

Majestically fair, she floats before my eyes,
Like unto Juno's self, like Leda, Helena!
Ah, me! already gone! Broad, shapeless, high up-piled,
Like far-off peaks of ice, it settles in the East,
And flashes what they mean, the days that fleet and fade.
Still round my breast and brow there floats a film of mist,
Cool, tender, and caressing, filling me with cheer:
Now softly up and up, and lingeringly, it ascends,
Then draws together. Mocks me a witching form,
In semblance of youth's first, long-lost, supremest bliss?
From my heart's depths its earliest treasures well;
For me love, light of wing, in its first dawn it types;
The look, felt to the core, the first, scarce understood,
That, cherished in the heart, all treasures else outshone.
Like beauty of the soul, the sweet form is sublimed;
Still it dissolveth not, into the sky it soars,
And with it bears away whate'er is best in me.

A seven-league boot comes clamping in, followed presently by another. MEPHISTOPHELES *steps out. The boot strides rapidly away.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We've come on at a rattling pace!
But what's your fancy now? What drags
You down on this disgusting place,
All gaping chasms and grewsome crags?
Though not where now it is, I know it well;
For 'twas in very sooth the floor of hell.

FAUST.

Your stock of silly legends never fails;
Again you'd mock me with these idle tales?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*gravely*).

When God the Lord (why, all too well I know)
Hurled us from out the sky to depths profound,
Where fires eterne shot from their central glow
Great sheets of flame that circled round and round,
We found ourselves, 'neath that too copious light,
Together jammed in most unpleasant plight.
The devils fell a-coughing, all of them,
Up hill, down dale, they spat and voided phlegm:
With acids and with sulphurous stench inflated —
That was a gas! — hell grew so much dilated
That very soon the earth's crust, flat at first,
Thick though it was, with a great crash upburst!
So things are all reversed; and this is how,
What bottom was erewhile is summit now.
The good sound doctrine, too, on this they base,
To give what's undermost the topmost place.
For we escaped from fiery bondage there,
To lord it bravely in the upper air, —
An open secret, warily concealed,
And only lately to mankind revealed.[1]

FAUST.

To me are mountain-masses nobly dumb;
I neither ask them whence, nor why, they come.
When Nature in herself herself had grounded,
Deftly the earthly ball she shaped and rounded;
With crested peak and rifted gorge she played,
Mountain with mountain, cliff with cliff arrayed;
The hills she moulded next, and sloped their steeps
Into the valleys down with gentle sweeps:
Then growth and verdure followed; spasms of fire
She needed not, to work out her desire.

[1] This seems to refer to the Scriptural allusion to Satan as "Prince of the Powers of the Air."

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, that's your view! To you 'tis clear as light;
But those who saw all know 'twas different quite.
Zounds! I was by, when with convulsive shock
The abyss burst up, with flames that roared and swirled,
When Moloch's hammer, smiting rock on rock,
Far in the air the splintered mountains hurled.
Strange massive boulders strew the country still;
The force that flung them there, who can explain?
As for philosophy, it never will:
There lies the rock, and there it must remain;
Thinking and theories are labour vain.
Your common folk, they only are cock-sure;
To try to shake their notions were mere waste,
Their wisdom long ago was quite mature;
A marvel 'tis, to Satan's credit placed.
On crutch of faith your pilgrim hobbles on
To Devil's Bridges, to the Devil's Stone.

FAUST.

What nature is, seen from the point of view
Of devils, is worth consideration too.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A fig for Nature! What is she to me?
My honour's touched! Myself was there to see!
The people we, grand issues to achieve;
Convulsion, outrage, madness! See, believe!
But now no more with sayings dark to tease you.
Did nothing in our upper surface please you?
You saw, stretched out in boundless space before ye,
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
Well, though you be so hard to satisfy,
Did nothing gladden either heart or eye?

FAUST.

Oh, yes! A grand idea lured me on.
Divine it!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That is quickly done.
I'd seek me out a city, which
Was in all urban horrors rich,
Close crookèd lanes, high gable-peaks,
Cramped market-place, kale, turnips, leeks,
Shambles, where blue-fly swarms and feasts
On carcasses of well-fed beasts:
There will you find at any time
Odours and bustle both sublime.
Vast squares I'd have, broad streets, that go
To make up an impressive show;
And lastly, where no gate confines,
Suburbs that spread in endless lines.
Of carriages I should have store,
To keep up an incessant roar,
And cheer me with the eternal flow
Of ant-swarms bustling to and fro.
And let me ride, or let me walk,
I still should be the pride, the talk
Of thousands, wheresoe'er I went.

FAUST.

Such things can bring me no content.
One's pleased that men should multiply,
And in their way be fairly fed,
Be even trained and taught; but by-and-by
We find, that thus are only rebels bred.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Then, all for my delight, I'd rear a pile,
Where breezes freshliest blow, superb in style.

Hill, woodland, meadow, field, and glade,
Into a glorious garden should be made;
Smooth velvet lawns, enclosed in walls of green,
With shady groves, and winding walks between;
Tumbling cascades, from rock to rock that leap,
With water-jets of every varied sweep,
Majestic soaring some, with all around
Innumerable sprays, that hiss, and splash, and bound.
A dainty snug retreat I'd next prepare,
And lodge a bevy of fair women there,
Where through the illimitable hours I could
Enjoy the sweetest social solitude.
Women, I say; for, be it understood,
I never, never can my thoughts encumber
With the dear things but in the pural number.

FAUST.

Vulgar and vile! Sardanapalus!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Good!
Oh, if one might divine your purpose! High,
Beyond a doubt, it is, and noble too!
When you were sailing to the moon so nigh,
Was it a craze for her that wafted you?

FAUST.

Not so! There still is scope for great
Achievements on this earthly sphere —
Things that shall make my memory dear.
Bold deeds alone my energy can sate.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

So then 'tis fame you would attain?
That you come fresh from heroines is plain.

FAUST.

To rule, to own, that is my thought.
The deed is all, the fame is nought.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yet poets will turn up, to blaze
Your glory forth to after-days,
And set by folly fools a-craze.

FAUST.

Where is the thing at which thou wilt not carp?
How shouldst thou know what man desires?
Thy odious nature, bitter, caustic, sharp,
How should it know what man requires?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well, go your own way, since you must!
To me the full scope of your whims entrust!

FAUST.

On the sea's wide expanse I turned to look;
It heaved, as from within, with sullen roar,
Then it drew backward, and its billows shook,
To storm the broad reach of the level shore.
And, as a tyrant, overbearing mood
Jars the free soul, that writhes a wrong to see,
Excites the feelings, stirs the passionate blood
Into a ferment, so that angered me.
I deemed it chance, the scene more closely eyed;
A little while, then backward rolled the tide,
And from the goal so proudly reached withdrew;
But, come the hour, the sport begins anew.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*ad spectatores*).

To me this pretty tale no news can tell;
Some hundred thousand years I've known it well.

FAUST (*continues with passionate warmth*).

Onward it sweeps by courses numberless,
Barren itself, to squander barrenness;
Now swelling, growing, rolling on, it drowns
In desolation leagues of wasted downs;
There riots, wave on wave, with wanton force,
Then ebbs — and nothing's been achieved, of course.
I might despair, to see the aimless way
Such lawless elements exert their sway.
Yet no despair shall my resolve benumb;
Here I might struggle, here might overcome!
Might? Shall! Howe'er the waves run high, and fleet,
Gently they lap around each hill they meet;
Rage how they may and proudly domineer,
Still puny heights their crests against them rear,
And puny chasms to suck them down are strong.
Straight plan on plan into my mind 'gan throng;
Mine, mine the joy, of joys most precious, be,
Back from the shore to bear the imperious sea,
The bounds to narrow of the watery track,
And far into itself to thrust it back!
My plans I shall develop bit by bit:
You know my wish; be hold, and further it!

[*Drums and warlike music are heard behind the spectators, in the distance on the right.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, nothing easier! Hark, these drums afar!

FAUST.

How! War again? All wise men shrink from war.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Or war or peace, 'tis wise to lose no chance
Of reaping gain from every circumstance.
Who'd let a favourable opening slip?
Here's one! Well, Faustus, get it in thy grip!

FAUST.

Such riddling balderdash, I prithee, spare,
And what you drive at in a word declare!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

As I was coming here, I learned that lately
The worthy Emperor has been worried greatly.
You know the man. While we amused him, played
Into his hands the spurious wealth we made,
He held the whole world cheap; for he was young
When he succeeded to the throne, and so
To the false notion foolishly he clung,
That power and pleasure hand in hand might go,
And that 'twas fine, and the right thing to do,
To rule, and revel in enjoyment too.

FAUST.

A great mistake. He that is fit to rule,
In ruling must a high contentment find;
Of lofty aims his bosom should be full,
Yet what they are, by none must be divined.
What's whispered in one loyal ear and wise,
When it is done, takes all men by surprise.
So shall he wear right worthily the crown,
So stand supreme. Mere pleasure drags us down.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Not such is he! all times on pleasure bent!
Meanwhile the realm by anarchy was rent,

When high and low were each with each at feud,
When brother hunted brother, hacked and hewed,
Castle 'gainst castle warred, and town 'gainst town,
And guilds conspired to pull the nobles down.
Bishops against their flocks and Chapters rose;
And men, if they but met by chance, were foes.
In churches murder, at each city gate
Thieves lay for merchants, travellers, in wait.
Thus all men grew pugnacious in their bent;
For life was constant warfare. So things went.

FAUST.

Went! Limped along, fell down, got up, and then
Collapsed, and all aheap fell down again.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And yet this state of things none dared to blame,
For every man had some ambitious aim;
The very smallest his big project had,
But good men found things grow at last too mad.
Then rose the able in their might, and said:
"He that will give us peace shall be our head!
The Emperor cannot, will not! Let us choose
One, will new soul into the realm infuse,
Quicken the world into a nobler life,
Make all men feel secure, end rapine, strife,
And peace and justice through the land diffuse!"

FAUST.

A priestly twang in that!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Priests too were there.
For portly paunch they wanted copious fare;

They had a deeper stake than all the rest.
Rebellion grew, they the rebellion blessed!
And the poor Emperor, whom we made so gay,
To battle moves, perhaps his last, to-day.

FAUST.

It grieves me much — so good, so frank was he!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Pshaw! While there's life, there's hope! Come, let us see!
Let us but get him clear of this close valley!
He's safe for life, with one successful rally.
Which way the dice may tumble, who can tell?
Come luck, then vassals they will come as well!

[*They climb up the central mountain-peak, and look down upon the army drawn up in the valley. Drums and military music resound from below.*

Ha! The position's chosen well, I see.
If we strike in, he's sure of victory.

FAUST.

What now is in the wind? Deceit!
Magic illusion! Shows that cheat!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Warcraft, by which are battles won!
Think of the work you wish begun,
And to your grand idea cleave!
Save for the Emperor his throne and land;
Then, kneeling, from his hand in fief receive
A limitless expanse of ocean-strand.

FAUST.

You've compassed many things, 'tis true:
Well, well, go on, and win a battle too!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No; you're to win it! You must play
The general-in-chief to-day.

FAUST.

An honour truly, to command
Where I just nothing understand!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Leave to your Staff to see things straight,
And in the background calmly wait.
Long since I traced war's blunders to their source;
For triumph, on the elemental force
Of mountain and of man I rest:
Who into play can bring both these, is blest.

FAUST.

Who are the armed men there below?
Have you stirred up the Hill-folk?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No!
But, like good Master Peter Squence,[1]
The whole squad in its quintessence.

[1] A not very obvious allusion to the Peter Quince of "The Midsummer Night's Dream," who became the Peter Squenz of a German farce.

Enter THE THREE MIGHTY MEN.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Here my fine fellows come! You see,
Of very different years they be —
Dress, armour different: you will not
Come badly off with such a lot. [*Ad spectatores.*
There's not a child but loves to see
Men in cuirass and knightly gorget dight;
And, as these knaves quite allegoric be,
They will for that give all the more delight.

BULLY (*young, lightly armed, clad in motley*).

If one stares at me, eye to eye,
I dash my fist straight off into his chops;
And any coward, if he fly,
I clutch him by the hair until he stops.

GRAB-QUICK (*manly, well-armed, richly clad*).

Such pranks are idle and unfitting,
An utter waste of time and tide;
Seize, pillage, plunder, unremitting,
And think of nothing else beside!

HOLDFAST (*stricken in years, strongly armed, without other garment*).

No mighty boon in that, I say!
Wealth, even though great, soon slips away
In life's swift currents strong and deep.
To seize is well, but better 'tis to keep:
Leave the gray carlot free to act,
And he will keep your gear intact.
[*They descend the mountain together.*

SCENE II. — *On the Spur of the Mountain.*

Drums and martial music heard from below. The EMPEROR'S *tent is pitched.* EMPEROR, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, *Attendants.*

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

I still am satisfied, 'twas best
To draw back to the valley here
Our forces, when so hotly pressed:
'Twill win the day for us, I'm clear.

EMPEROR.

The event will show how that may be;
But this half flight, this yielding, troubles me.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

Look at our right flank! Ground, my liege, like this,
Not for the world would a true soldier miss;
The hills not steep, yet steeper than they show,
Odds in our favour, odds against the foe.
Whilst on the wavelike plain half hid we lie,
Their cavalry will never dare come nigh.

EMPEROR.

Nought's left me but to praise; stout heart,
Stout arm, can here play well their part.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

Here where the central plain spreads many a rood,
You see the phalanx in true fighting mood.
Their lances, by the early sun-rays kissed,
Shimmer and sparkle through the morning mist.

How dark waves to and fro the massive square!
There thousand hearts beat high, to do or dare.
How strong we are, by this you may divine;
To them I trust to break the enemy's line.

EMPEROR.

Now for the first time this fair sight I see:
Worth twice its numbers such a host must be.

COMMANDER - IN - CHIEF.

Nothing to say of our left flank have I;
The stubborn rocks stout heroes occupy.
Yon broken cliff, that gleams with arms, secures
The entrance to the pass, and so ensures,
That here the enemy, surprised, will break
Their force compact, and bloody shipwreck make.

EMPEROR.

See, where they come, my traitor kin! Oh, how
They called me cousin, uncle, brother! Now
Still more and more presumptuous they grew,
Stripped me of power, of kingly reverence due,
Then, by their feuds, laid my whole kingdom waste,
And now in rebel league to crush me haste!
From side to side awhile the people sway,
Then in the torrent's whirl are swept away.

COMMANDER - IN - CHIEF.

A trusty spy, to gather news sent out,
Comes hurrying down the rocks; ill news, I doubt!

FIRST SPY.

By what guile and daring may,
And by many an artful track,

Here and there we forced our way,
Yet small comfort bring we back.
Loyalty to thee was sworn
By many in fine words; but all
Hung back, for they, they said, were worn
By public peril, civic brawl.

EMPEROR.

Oh, for themselves alone self-seekers care;
Duty, love, honour, gratitude are nought.
When things are doing well, who takes to thought
How, when the next house burns, his own may fare?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

Here comes another, slow, with heavy feet:
He quakes in every limb, and seems dead beat.

SECOND SPY.

Glad were we, when we detected
Tumult raging, wild and weird;
All at once, and unexpected,
A new Emperor appeared.
Straight, submissive to his mandate,
O'er the plains the people sweep;
His false flag, as he had planned it,
They all follow — very sheep.

EMPEROR.

A rival Emperor as a boon I hail;
Emperor I never felt myself till now.
As a mere soldier did I don my mail;
For higher ends my casque now rings my brow.
At every *fête*, though brilliant it might be,
Complete throughout, yet danger lacked for me.

When, at your wish, to tilt at ring I went,
My heart beat high, I breathed the Tournament;
And had you not from war withheld me, fame
For deeds heroic would have crowned my name.
Mine was a soul, I felt, of dauntless mould,
When yonder sea of fire around me rolled;
It pressed upon me, threatening direful fate:
'Twas show, mere show, and yet the show was great.
Wild dreams I've had of victory and fame;
Now will I do what, left undone, was shame!

[*Heralds are despatched with a challenge to the rival Emperor. Enter* FAUST *in armour, his visor half closed.* THE THREE MIGHTY MEN *equipped and dressed as before.*

FAUST.

Behold us here, unchid withal, we hope;
For foresight, even when things are safe, there's scope.
The Mountain-folk, thou knowest, think and brood,
Deciphering the signs, in thoughtful mood,
That all through nature and the rocks are strewed.
Spirits, that long have left the plains, cling still
With fondness to lone peak and misty hill.
Through labyrinthine chasms their work is sped,
'Mid gases' reek, by fumes metallic bred;
They separate, test, combine, and never rest,
Of something new for evermore in quest.
With the light hand of spiritual power
They build up forms translucent hour by hour;
Then in the crystal, dumb although it be,
The upper world and all it does they see.

EMPEROR.

This I have heard, and I believe it true;
But what have we, friend, with all this to do?

FAUST.

The sorcerer of Sabine Norcia thou
Hast to thy service bound — he serves thee now.
How dread the fate hung over him, and dire!
The brushwood crackled, up shot tongues of fire;
Piled were the sapless billets round him, which
Were intermixed with brimstone-rods, and pitch:
Save him nor man, nor God, nor devil could, —
But thou didst burst these bonds of blazing wood!
This was at Rome. That service ne'er forgot,
To guard thy welfare is his constant thought.
Still from that hour, of self unheeding, he
Questions the stars, the deeps, and all for thee.
He charged us, straight to make thy business ours,
And stand by thee. Great are the mountains' powers —
Nature in them works so supremely free:
This stupid priests denounce as sorcery.

EMPEROR.

On days of festal, when my guests I greet,
Who, brimmed with pleasant thoughts, for pleasure meet,
It gladdens me to see them throng and press,
And, with the crowd, the hall grow less and less;
But welcomer than all the man must be
Who chivalrously comes to stand by me,
Here with the dawn, when perilous issues wait,
And o'er us darkly hang the scales of Fate.
But at this crisis grave, where now we stand,
Keep from thy ready sword thy stalwart hand,
Respect the hour, when mighty hosts draw near,
For or against me, to do battle here!
Self makes the man! Who covets crown or throne
Must prove his claim by prowess of his own.
As for that phantom who against us stands,
Dubs himself Emperor, ruler of our lands,

FAUST (*pointing to the middle one*).

Let him there also follow your commands!

HAVE QUICK (*advancing*).

With the army's pluck, heroic and fine,
Shall the thirst for plunder and pillage combine;
On this one object be all intent,
The rival Emperor's gorgeous tent!
Not long shall he flaunt it there in pride;
To the onslaught myself will the phalanx guide.

PILLAGE-FAST, SUTLER WOMAN (*fawning upon him*).

Although his wife I may not be,
He's the dearest of fancy men to me.
What a harvest awaits us there! Your drab
Is a very devil to gripe and grab.
Where she plunders and rifles, no pity has she;
Once win, and to do what you like you're free.

[*Exeunt.*

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

As we foresaw, upon our left their right
Is hurled in force. Each man of ours will fight
To the last gasp to hold the foe in check,
That tries to storm the gorge's narrow neck.

FAUST (*beckons to the left*).

Pray you, sir, note yon fellow, too! What harm,
If strength consents itself with strength to arm?

HOLDFAST (*advancing*).

For the left wing dismiss all care!
'Twill hold its own, when I am there.
The old one about him has all his wits;
What I once grasp, no lightning splits. [*Exit.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*descending from above*).

Look now, how there, behind our left,
From every jagged rocky cleft,
Armed men press onward, closely packed,
The pass still further to contract!
With casque, cuirass, sword, shield, and spear,
A bulwark at our backs they rear,
Waiting the signal to strike home.
[*Aside to the knowing ones.*
You must not ask me whence they come.
I've not been slow, since I went out,
I've cleared the armouries round about.
They stood on foot or horseback there,
As if the lords of earth they were;
Knights, kaisers, kings they were of yore,
Now empty snail-shells, nothing more.
Many's the ghost himself with these has decked,
And to the life the Middle Ages played.
Whatever imps be now in them arrayed,
For this once they'll produce a rare effect. [*Aloud.*
Hark! What a temper they are in!
Mail clanks 'gainst mail with clattering din!
Torn banners, too, are fluttering there,
That longed again to breathe fresh air.
Here we have got an ancient people, who
Fain in this modern fray would mingle, too.
[*Tremendous blare of trumpets from above; perceptible wavering in the hostile army.*

FAUST.

Dark the horizon grows; meseems,
Breaks here and there in fitful gleams
A ruddy and portentous shine.
The spears, blood-boltered, flash and glare;
The rocks, the wood, the very air,
All heaven in sympathy combine,

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The right flank stoutly holds its ground;
But, towering in their midst, I see
The giant Bully, dealing free
Those swashing strokes of his around.

EMPEROR.

At first I saw one arm up; now
A dozen rage there. Anyhow,
This can't be natural or right.

FAUST.

Hast thou not heard of mists, that round
The coasts of Sicily abound?
There, hovering clear in broad daylight,
Uplifted high in middle air,
Mirrored in exhalations rare,
A wondrous vision meets the gaze —
Towns oscillating to and fro,
Gardens now high, now sinking low,
Picture on picture breaking through the haze.

EMPEROR.

But yet, how strange! See, each spear-head,
As if with lightning, flashes red!
While moves the host, on every lance
I see a flamelet flit and dance:
To me it looks too spectral, quite.

FAUST.

Forgive me, these things glimpses show
Of spirits gone hence long ago,
The famous Twins revealed once more,
By whom of old all seamen swore, —
For our last stroke they nerve their might.

EMPEROR.

To whom, then, do we owe it, say,
That nature, in this wondrous way,
For us should spells so rare unite?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

To whom, but to that mighty master
Who in his breast thy fate doth keep?
To see thee menaced with disaster,
Stirred feelings in him strong and deep.
So thou art saved, he gladly would
Meet death, to prove his gratitude.

EMPEROR

Round me that time with cheers and pomp they pressed
Then I was something; this I wished to test,
So, without thinking, seized the chance, and there
Gave the white-bearded fellow some fresh air.
By this I robbed the clergy of a treat;
Thus was my fall in their good books complete.
Now, after all these years, am I to test
The outcome of a deed done half in jest?

FAUST.

Rich interest follows generous deed.
Now turn your gaze on high! He will
Some signal send, methinks. Give heed!
It will anon be visible.

EMPEROR.

An eagle hovers in the vaulted blue.
Him doth a griffin, fierce for fight, pursue.

FAUST.

Now mark! This augurs well, at least.
The griffin is a fabled beast;
What! He to wrangle with the eagle,
A bird so real and so regal?

EMPEROR.

See now, in circles wide they float,
Each coursing each — and now they clash
Together, and with gash on gash
Rend one another's breast and throat.

FAUST.

Look, look! The sorry griffin, how,
All rent and scarred, he staggers, drops
His lion tail! And see, he now
Is lost amid the pine-tree tops!

EMPEROR.

May this portend what is to be!
Lost in amaze, I wait to see.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*toward the right*).

See, see! the enemy give back,
Pressed by our still renewed attack,
And, feebly keeping up the fight,
They're falling back upon their right.
The left of their main body so
They into dire confusion throw.
Now on the right our phalanx brings
Its serried front, like lightning flings
Itself on the weak spot, and straight,
As ocean waves in stormy weather,
The forces, matched in bulk and weight,
In fray tumultuous clash together,

Nothing was ever better done;
For us the battle has been won.

EMPEROR (*on the left side, to* FAUST).

Look! Yonder something seems amiss!
What, what can be the cause of this?
No stones upon the foe are hailed,
And they the lower cliff have scaled;
None keep the heights, a blow to strike.
Look there! The foe, in serried mass,
Still pressing on and on, belike
Have gained possession of the pass;
Of ways unblest the issue plain!
These sleights of yours are all in vain. [*Pause.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

My ravens here their flight are winging;
What can the message be they're bringing?
The other side, I fear, prevails.

EMPEROR.

What may these ill-starred birds presage?
Hither they bend their swarthy sails,
Straight from the rock-fight's fiery rage.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to the Ravens*).

Sit down by me, at either ear!
Whom you protect need never fear,
For your advice is sound and sage.

FAUST (*to the* EMPEROR).

Hast never heard of pigeons, who
Back to their nest and fledgelings flew
From regions strange to them and far?
That's the case here, though different.

The pigeon-post in peace is sent,
The raven-post's required for war.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

They tell me of a grievous pinch.
Look how they're pressing, inch by inch,
Around our heroes' rocky wall!
The nearest heights are stormed, alas!
And, if we were to lose the pass,
Our case would be most critical.

EMPEROR.

Betrayed! I am betrayed at last!
'Tis you have round me drawn the net!
Horror! to feel it holds me fast!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Courage! There's nothing lost as yet.
Patience unties the hardest knot;
Work's hottest, when the end's at hand.
I trusty messengers have got.
Command that I may take command!

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF (*who meanwhile has arrived*).

These men thou hast to counsel ta'en,
To me were, first and last, a pain.
The battle, now I cannot mend it,
'Twas they began, and they may end it.
My baton I to thee restore.

EMPEROR.

Not so! Retain it, till the Fates
Perchance may send us happier hours.

I shudder at this fellow's powers,
And his weird bird-confederates.
[*To* MEPHISTOPHELES.
Give you the baton? Surely no.
You're not, methinks, the proper man.
Command! Avert our overthrow!
And so betide, betide what can!
[*Exit into the tent with the* COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

His baton! Pooh! What silly fuss!
Small profit would it bring to us.
There was a kind of cross upon it.

FAUST.

What will you do?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Do? I have done it.
Hence, my black cousins, apt and fleet,
To the great mountain-lake! The Undines greet,
And for the semblance of a flood entreat!
By arts, hard to divine, of female scheming,
They from the thing that is can part the seeming,
And that it is the very thing will swear. [*Pause.*

FAUST.

Our ravens have with flattery rare
Cajoled the water-nymphs from their lair.
See, trickling rills begin to gush!
From many a dry bare rocky brow
The springs in full swift volume rush.
Yon victory is no victory now.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Strange greeting that! What follows next?
The boldest climber is perplexed.

FAUST.

Brook downward bounds to brook in headlong course,
From the ravines they rush with twofold force;
And now in one bright arch the torrent sweeps.
Wide o'er the rocks it spreads, a shining flat,
Flashes and foams to this side and to that,
And ledge by ledge into the valley leaps.
What boots the bravest heart a tide to stay
Must sweep before it everything away?
My very flesh to see such havoc creeps.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Nothing see I of all these water-lies;
Illusions these only for human eyes:
This wondrous hap to me is sheer delight.
Huddled in heaps, they turn in headlong flight,
Fancying, the fools, they will be drowned,
And puff and blow on solid ground,
Their arms, like swimmers, striking out.
Now all's confusion, utter rout!
[*The Ravens have come back.*
To the great Master I'll speak well of you.
Now, would you prove yourselves true Masters too,
Hence to the smithy, belching fire,
Where the dwarf-folk, that never tire,
Strike sparks from metal and from stone;
Ask them for fire, while lightly chattering —
Fire brilliant, dazzling, sputtering, spattering,
Such as is but to fancy known.
Lightning, no doubt, far in the sky,
And stars swift shooting from on high,

May any summer night be seen ;
But lightning on the brushwood gleaming,
And stars that hiss on ground that's steaming,
Are not such common sights, I ween.
So, without fuss, you understand,
You first must beg, and then command.
[*The Ravens fly away. All happens as prescribed.*
Thick darkness settles on the foe!
Which way to turn, they do not know.
Meteors all round, and sudden light,
To dazzle and confound the sight!
Magnificent! But now we want
Some sound to terrify and daunt.

FAUST.

The empty arms, from ancient halls that came,
Find the fresh air breathe vigour through their frame
They're rattling, banging, clattering up there —
A wonderful, discordant blare!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Quite right! They're not to be kept back!
Now rings out knightly whack on whack,
As in the famous good old days.
Gauntlet, cuirass, and cuisses too,
As Guelphs and Ghibellines, renew
Full tilt their never-ending frays.
Firm in transmitted rancour, they
A hate implacable display.
Now far and wide the tumult brays!
And so, at every devil's *fête*
Nought works so well as party hate,
Down to the last convulsive throe.
Wild sounds, that scatter fear and panic,

Mingled with piercing yells Satanic,
Ring down into the vale below.
[*War tumult in the Orchestra, passing at last into cheerful military music.*

SCENE III. — *The Rival Emperor's Tent.*

Throne, Rich Surroundings. HAVE QUICK — PILLAGE-FAST.

PILLAGE-FAST.

We're first upon the field, you see.

HAVE QUICK.

No raven flies so fast as we.

PILLAGE-FAST.

Oh, look, what heaps of treasure there!
Where to begin? To finish where?

HAVE QUICK.

So crammed the place with plunder stands,
I know not where to lay my hands.

PILLAGE-FAST.

That carpet suits me to a T;
My bed is often too hard for me.

HAVE QUICK.

A Morgenstern of steel! Just such
As I for years have longed for much!

PILLAGE - FAST.

That scarlet cloak with golden seams,
One like it has often crossed my dreams!

HAVE QUICK (*taking the weapon*).

With this one makes short work. A blow,
The fellow's dead, and on we go!
You've packed up such a lot, and yet
Not managed the right sort to get.
Leave all that rubbish where it lay;
Take one of these small chests away!
The army's niggard pay they hold;
Its belly's stuffed with solid gold.

PILLAGE - FAST.

'Tis mortal heavy! More than I
Am fit to lift or carry.

HAVE QUICK.

Try!
Quick, stoop! Duck down, and let me pack
The box upon your sturdy back.

PILLAGE - FAST.

Alack, alack! I'm done for! Whew!
It fairly breaks my back in two.
[*The chest falls and breaks open.*

HAVE QUICK.

There lies the red gold, all aheap;
Quick, quick, and up the shiners sweep!

PILLAGE-FAST (*crouches down*).

Into my lap with them! With this
We sha'n't do very much amiss.

HAVE QUICK.

There! That's enough! Off with you! Pack!
[*She rises.*
Your apron has a hole. Alack!
Whether you stand or move, no matter,
The treasure recklessly you scatter.

HALBERDIERS (*of the true* EMPEROR *enter*).

This spot is sacred! What are you about?
Rifling the Emperor's treasure-trove, I doubt?

HAVE QUICK.

Limb, life we risked, and cheaply for his sake,
And of the booty now our share we take.
'Tis common usage, friend, the victor's due;
And as for us, why, we are soldiers too.

HALBERDIERS.

That makes no part of our belief;
A soldier, quotha, and a thief!
The man who serves our Emperor must
Be one whose honesty we trust.

HAVE QUICK.

That honesty right well we know;
You name it "Contribution," though.
You're all on the same footing here;
The password of your trade is "Give!"
[*To* PILLAGE-FAST.
Start off with what you've sacked! 'Tis clear,
We're anything but welcome here. [*Exeunt.*

FIRST HALBERDIER.

The saucy knave! Why broke you not
His pate across upon the spot?

SECOND HALBERDIER.

Can't tell! I felt unnerved. They were
So phantom-like and weird a pair.

THIRD HALBERDIER.

Something went wrong about my sight;
'Twas dazzled, I saw nothing right.

FOURTH HALBERDIER.

What it all means, I fathom not.
All through the day it was so hot,
Oppressive, close, such sultry smother,
One kept his feet, down dropped another;
We groped and laid about us so,
A foeman fell at every blow;
Before our eyes there waved a mist,
Within our ears it buzzed and hissed:
So things went on, and here are we,
But know not how things came to be.

Enter THE EMPEROR *with four* PRINCES. THE HALBERDIERS *retire.*

EMPEROR.

Well, leave him to his fate! The day is ours. In panic rout
The beaten foe across the plains is scattered all about.
Here stands the empty throne, here finds the traitor's treasure place,
And, hung around with tapestries, contracts the narrow space.

We, rich in honour, shielded by our own true guards
the while,
Await our people's envoys here in high imperial style.
From every side come tidings in, glad tidings, hour by
hour,
That peace is to a realm restored, that gladly owns our
power.
If, in the stand we made, some sleights of jugglery
were wrought,
Yet, when all's said, 'twas we alone, and only we who
fought.
Mere accidents for those who fight will sometimes
work to good —
Here falls from heaven a meteor-stone, there rains a
shower of blood.
Sounds of a wild and wondrous kind boom from the
caverns near,
That make our hearts beat high, and fill the foeman's
hearts with fear.
A mark for lasting jeer and scorn, the vanquished
prone is laid;
By the exulting victor praise to the favouring God is
paid.
No need to give command, for all unite with one
accord
From thousand throats to cry, "We give Thee thanks
and praise, O Lord!"
Yet — best and highest praise of all! — I turn on mine
own breast, —
Which rarely I have done before, — mine eyes in
pious quest.
A young gay-hearted prince may waste the happy days
are his;
The rolling years teach how momentous every moment
is.
Therefore no more will I delay, but link myself with
you,

To stand for home, and court, and realm, ye worthy
Four and true. [*To the first Prince.*
'Twas you, O Prince, who skilfully and well disposed
our host,
Who in the crisis of the day showed nerve and skill
the most;
Now what the time demands work thou, peace being
thus restored,
Arch-Marshal henceforth be thy name! To thee I
give the sword.

ARCH-MARSHAL.

Thy faithful troops, till now engaged within the realm
alone,
When they have made thy frontiers safe, and safe with
it thy throne,
Then be it ours, on holidays, when thronging guests
are poured
Through thy ancestral banquet-hall, to dress thy festive
board.
Before thee then the sword I'll bear, I'll bear it by thy
side,
Of sovereign Majesty at once the symbol, guard, and
guide!

EMPEROR (*to the second Prince*).

Let him who doth a valiant heart with courtesy
unite —
Such thou! — be my Arch-Chamberlain! The duties
are not light.
Within our royal household be the head supreme of all;
Ill service do I get from them, so prone are they to
brawl.
Henceforth, by thy example taught, may they be more
inclined
To be to me, the Court, and all, obliging, courteous,
kind!

ARCH - CHAMBERLAIN.

The Master's lofty purposes to further bringeth grace;
To bring help to the good, and not to injure even the base,
To be without dissembling frank, and calm without deceit!
If thou, sir, see me through and through, my joy is all complete.
May fancy on that feast to come be peradventure bent,
The golden basin at the board to thee I shall present,
Thy rings for thee I'll hold, that so thy hands refreshed may be,
As my heart will at that glad time rejoice in smiles from thee.

EMPEROR.

My mood, in sooth, is now too grave on festive thoughts to rest.
And yet not so! To start afresh with cheerfulness is best. [*To the third Prince.*
You as Arch-Steward I select. Henceforward under you
Shall be my forests and their game, my farm, my poultry, too!
Let me select the dishes that I love, and you prepare
These dishes, as each month shall bring its own, with heedful care.

ARCH - STEWARD.

Gladly will I all meats forego, my appetite might whet,
Until some dish, will glad thy heart, before thee shall be set.
The kitchen staff shall join with me to bring what's distant here,
And to accelerate, besides, the seasons of the year.

Thee charms not far nor early cheer, wherewith thy table's graced;
Plain food and nourishing is more congenial to thy taste.

EMPEROR (*to the fourth Prince*).

Since revelry and feast alone perforce engage us now,
Young hero, beautiful as brave, my cupbearer be thou!
As Arch-Cupbearer, let henceforth this special care be thine,
To see our cellars richly stored with the very choicest wine.
But be thou temperate thyself, and never lose thy head,
By the exhilarating lures of social mirth misled.

ARCH-CUPBEARER.

Even striplings, O my liege, if trust in them be only shown,
Are found, ere one may look about, to man's full vigour grown:
So I at that high feast as well shall duly take my place;
The Imperial sideboard I shall deck with truly royal grace,
With goblets silvern, golden, too, magnificent to see;
But chief I'll choose a beaker, far excelling all, for thee —
A clear Venetian glass, wherein a joy delicious waits,
Gives fuller flavour to the wine, but ne'er inebriates.
Too great reliance some will place on such a wondrous prize;
But in thy moderation, Sire, a truer safeguard lies.

EMPEROR.

What in this grave and solemn hour I have on you conferred,
You have with confidence received, relying on my word.

The Emperor's word is mighty, and assures all gifts, of course,
Yet his Sign-Manual's needed too, his mandates to enforce.
This they shall have; and see, where comes, most opportunely too,
The very man to give to them the formal sanction due.

Enter THE ARCHBISHOP — LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

EMPEROR.

When once an arch's curvature is to the keystone braced,
Then is it for all future time beyond all danger placed.
Thou seest these four Princes here! To these we have explained,
How in the days to come our house and Court shall be maintained.
But now, ye Five, on you and your sagacity and power,
What will promote the whole realm's weal is rested from this hour.
In landed wealth 'tis meet that you all others shall outshine,
Therefore to you these broad domains I here at once assign,
The forfeit heritage of that revolted traitor crew.
Thus many a region fair I give — for stanch ye were and true —
Together with the fullest right, whene'er you see a chance,
By raid, or purchase, or exchange, their limits to enhance,
And power to exercise unchecked whatever rights to you,
As owners of the soil, by use and wont are rightly due.

The judgments you as judges give shall final be: so high
Your power shall stand, that no appeal against them e'er shall lie.
Then impost dues, and tithe and toll, safe-conduct, duties, fees,
Shall all be yours, and mining, salt, and coinage royalties.
For that my gratitude may thus effectively be shown,
I've raised you to a rank is only second to my own.

ARCHBISHOP.

Let me in name of all to thee our deepest thanks express:
Making us safe and strong, thyself shall strengthened be no less.

EMPEROR.

Even higher dignities, and more, I to you Five will give.
I live but for my realm, and I for that delight to live;
Yet does the great ancestral claim withdraw my gaze from hours
Of stir and striving to the doom that still before us lours.
I too, in God's good hour, must part from all that I hold dear:
Then be it yours to choose the man who shall succeed me here;
On holy altar raise him high, the crown upon his brow,
And thus bring to a peaceful close what was all storm but now.

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

Pride in our hearts, but bowed in deep humility we stand,
Thy vassals, princes though we be, the foremost in the land.

While runs the blood within our veins in copious current, still
The body we, prompt to obey thy every wish and will.

EMPEROR.

And now to end! Let all the powers that we to-day concede,
Be ratified for all future time by manual-sign and deed.
You o'er your property shall hold dominion full and free,
On this condition, that it ne'er partitioned out shall be:
Moreover, if you add to what you now from us receive,
You to your eldest sons the whole shall in like manner leave.

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

To parchment presently will I transfer this statute, fraught
With weal to us and to the realm, right happy in the thought.
To have it written fair and sealed, the Chancery shall see;
And ratified it then, my liege, by thy great hand shall be.

EMPEROR.

And so I now dismiss you all, that you conjointly may
Deliberate on the events of this momentous day.

[*The Temporal Princes retire. The* ARCHBISHOP *remains, and speaks in a pathetic tone.*

ARCHBISHOP.

The Chancellor has retired, my liege, the Bishop stays behind,
To crave thine ear, impelled by grave anxiety of mind.
His father-heart is sad for thee, and full of sore dismay.

EMPEROR.

Dismay? Speak out! What troubles you on this so joyous day?

ARCHBISHOP.

With deep and bitter anguish, sir, at such a time I find
Thy hallowed head in compact close with Satanas combined!
True, thou'rt secured upon thy throne, — so seems it, so I hope, —
But heedless, ah! of God the Lord, and our Holy Sire the Pope,
Who, when he hears of this, will straight pronounce his awful doom,
And with his lightnings will thy realm, thy sinful realm, consume.
For he has not forgotten how, the day that thou wert crowned,
A great and solemn time, thou hadst the Sorcerer unbound,
When from thy diadem the first bright beam of grace was shed,
A scandal to all Christendom, on that accursèd head.
But beat thy breast, and render up — 'tis for thy spirit's health —
To Holy Church some little slice of thy ill-gotten wealth:
The broad expanse of hills, we'll say, where stood thy tent, and where
In thy defence were banded evil Spirits of the Air,
Where to the Prince of Lies thou didst lend willing ears of late, —
That spot do thou to pious use contritely dedicate,
With mountain and dense forest too, as far as they extend,
And hilly slopes, with verdure clad, that in broad meadows end;

Pellucid lakes, well stocked with fish, brooks numberless withal,
That, hurrying down with snake-like bends, into the valleys brawl;
Then the broad vale itself, with meads, enclosures, open plains:
A penitence, that such utterance finds, sure grace and pardon gains.

EMPEROR.

This heavy sin of mine so fills my heart and soul with awe,
I leave it to yourself, my lord, the boundaries to draw.

ARCHBISHOP.

First be the unhallowed spot, whose sins for vengeance cry aloud,
With all due speed unto the Lord Most High for ever vowed.
In spirit I can see the walls rise high and ever higher;
The first beams of the morning sun illuminate the choir;
The structure takes the Cross's form, complete in all its parts,
Longer and higher grows the nave, and glads believers' hearts;
Now through the stately portal wide they stream, aflame with zeal,
And far o'er hill and dale resounds the bells' first ringing peal;
They clash and clang from lofty towers that high aspire to heaven,
And penitents throng in, and feel new life to them is given.

On the great Consecration Day — that day soon may
we see! —
When all are met, thy presence will the chief adorn-
ment be.

EMPEROR.

A work so noble well may serve to show the pious
thought,
To praise the Lord, and expiate the sin that I have
wrought.
Enough! Already I can feel my spirit soaring higher.

ARCHBISHOP.

This under hand and seal I now as Chancellor require.

EMPEROR.

A formal document, that secures the Church in fullest
right,
Lay thou before me, and I will subscribe it with de-
light.

ARCHBISHOP (*has taken leave, but turns back, as he is going out*).

Then to the work as it proceeds, 'tis meet thou dedicate
Tithes, taxes, customs, tribute, toll, and every due and
rate,
For ever. It requires so much the fabric to maintain,
And the staff to keep the service up will cost vast
sums, 'tis plain.
To push the building quickly, on so desolate a spot,
Some gold, of that which thou hast ta'en, thou wilt to
us allot.
We shall require, besides — and this I needs must call
to mind —
Much foreign timber, lime, and slates, and things of
the like kind.

The people, from the pulpit taught, will do the carriage; yes!
All those who for her service work, the Church doth ever bless. [*Exit.*

EMPEROR.

Oh, heavy is the sin and great that such dire penance craves!
They've brought me to a pretty pass, these necromancing knaves!

ARCHBISHOP (*returning again, and making a deep obeisance*).

Pardon, my liege, the realm's seashore to that vile worthless man
Has been made over, but he will be blasted by the Ban,
Unless there, too, our Holy Church in deep contrition thou
With tithes and taxes, rents and dues, and revenues endow.

EMPEROR (*losing his temper*).

There is no land there yet; the sea sweeps o'er it far and wide.

ARCHBISHOP.

His time comes who's content to wait, with right upon his side.
We still shall have thy royal word — no power may that gainsay. [*Exit.*

EMPEROR (*alone*).

So may I just as well at once my kingdom sign away!

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *Open country.*

WANDERER.

There they are! How well I mind them,
The dark lindens old and strong.
And I am again to find them
After years of travel long!
'Tis the old spot, unforsaken;
Still the sheltering cot is there,
As when billows tempest-shaken
Flung me on these sandhills bare.
My kind hosts, I fain would greet them,
Brave good helpful souls, again:
But I scarce may hope to meet them;
They were aged even then.
Pious, ah, how pious were ye!
Shall I knock, or call? What ho!
Hail, if kindly still as e'er, ye
Of good deeds the blessing know!

BAUCIS (*very old*).

Hush, hush, stranger, hush! No breaking
On my husband's spell of rest!
To give to his few hours of waking
Vigour, good long sleep is best.

WANDERER.

Mother, thou still here, and he, too,
To receive the thanks I owe
For the young man's life, by ye two
Saved now many years ago?

Art thou Baucis, who so tended,
Nursed me back to life again?
[*The husband comes out of the cottage.*
Thou he (*turning to* PHILEMON), who with courage splendid
Snatched my treasure from the main;
Your fire, blazing fast and faster,
Your bell with its silver sound,
They from that so dire disaster
Me a safe deliverance found.
Let me on a little way there,
View the boundless ocean first;
Let me kneel, and let me pray there!
Seems my heart as it would burst!
[*He walks away upon the dunes.*

PHILEMON (*to* BAUCIS).

Quick, wife! Spread the table under
The green shadow of our trees.
Let him go! He'll start in wonder.
Not believing what he sees!
[*Following the wanderer. Standing beside him.*
Where the billows, wildly booming,
Savagely maltreated you,
Now 'tis like a garden, blooming
Fair as eye could wish to view.
Old in years as I was growing,
Help I could not, as of yore;
And, while my own strength was going,
Farther off, too, went the shore.
Great folks' serfs, with dauntless daring,
Trenches dug and bulwarks spread,
Ocean's ancient rights impairing,
To be masters in its stead.
See, green fields on fields, and nigh them
Woodland, garden, mead, and town!

But now come, our viands, try them,
For the sun will soon be down.
Far out there, see, vessels beating
Up to port for night repair,
Birdlike to their nest retreating,
For there's now a harbour there.
Only on the sky-line yonder
May a streak of sea be seen;
All ways, far as eye can wander,
Lies thick-peopled land between.

SCENE II. — *In the Little Garden.*

The three at table.

BAUCIS (*to the stranger*).

Silent still? And not a grain here
Yet has crossed your lips?

PHILEMON.

Od's life!
Of our marvels more he'd fain hear:
You like talking; tell him, wife.

BAUCIS.

Marvels! Ay! If ever any;
Even yet they make me grew;
For in manner quite uncanny
The whole thing was carried through.

PHILEMON.

Can the Emperor be to blame? It
Was himself gave up the shore.
Did a herald not proclaim it,
Trumpeting, as he passed our door?

On our downs hard by their footing
First was planted. There were seen
Bothies, tents. But soon, upshooting,
Rose a palace 'midst the green.

BAUCIS.

Vain all day their hacking, tearing,
Pick and shovel, stroke on stroke!
Where night-long great fires were flaring,
Stood a bank when morning broke.
Human victims surely bled there —
Through the dark their cries were borne;
Flashing fires to seaward sped there,
'Twas a great canal by morn.
He is godless, he has set his
Heart upon our cot, our wood.
A fine neighbour he, who'll get his
Will, and will not be withstood!

PHILEMON.

Still he made a fairish tender, —
A snug farm on his new land!

BAUCIS.

Never your own knoll surrender!
Trust not what was sea and sand.

PHILEMON.

To the chapel, on the dying
Rays of sunset there to gaze!
Let us ring, kneel, pray, relying
On the God of ancient days!

SCENE III. — *Palace.*

Spacious ornamental garden — wide, straight canal.

FAUST (*in extreme old age, walking and meditating*).

LYNCEUS, THE WARDER (*through his speaking-trumpet*).

Sinks the sun, the ships are nearing
Port before the night shall fall,
And a stately bark is steering
Hither up the great canal.
Her gay pennons brightly flutter;
On her stout masts swell the sails;
Blessings on thee seamen mutter;
Thee The Blest high fortune hails.
[*The chapel bell on the dunes rings.*

FAUST.

Accursèd bell! Its tinkle wounds me,
Like caitiff shot from hand unkind.
Unbounded is my realm before me,
Vexation stings me from behind.
It minds me, by its hateful pealing,
My happiness is mixed with pine:
The clump of limes, the dusky shieling,
The crumbling chapel are not mine.
If there I wished an hour of leisure,
Shades not my own would blight the day,
They would be thorns to dash my pleasure.
Oh, would that I were far away!

WARDER (*as above*).

How blithely does the galley gay
Before the fresh breeze cleave its way!

How on it bears a towering hoard
Of sacks, chests, coffers, piled aboard!
[*A splendid galley, richly and showily laden with products of foreign countries.*

MEPHISTOPHELES. THE THREE MIGHTY COMPANIONS.

CHORUS.

Back already, land we here!
All hail, master, patron dear!
[*They disembark; the goods are brought ashore.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well have we shown what we could do —
Content, if we are praised by you:
With but two ships we went away,
Now twenty have in port to-day.
By the rich cargo we have brought,
Behold, what great things we have wrought!
Free ocean sets the spirit free;
We make our own whate'er we see;
What's needed there's a hasty grip —
One grabs a fish, one grabs a ship.
Once we have three of these in store,
We never rest till we have four;
Then is the fifth in evil plight.
Who has the power, he has the right;
The WHAT'S the question, not the HOW.
At seaman's craft I am not clever:
Trade, commerce, piracy, are now
A Trinity, to be sundered never.

THE THREE LUSTY COMPANIONS.

No thank, or welcome! no welcome, or thank!
As if the things we have brought him stank!

Quite out of humour he looks, and grim;
This royal booty delights not him.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Expect no further reward; for you
Already have taken what was your due.

THE COMPANIONS.

You're only jesting? Fair is fair!
We all insist on an equal share.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

First range in order, through hall and hall,
The things are richest, one and all.
The dazzling show when he comes to see,
And finds how precious and rare they be,
Be sure, he'll do the handsome thing,
And give the fleet high junketing.
To-morrow the Bona Robas[1] come;
They shall be well cared for, all and some.
[*The cargo is carried away.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to* FAUST).

With gloomy looks and brow austere
You of your high good fortune hear.
Success has on your wisdom smiled —
Ocean and shore are reconciled;
And from the shore the ocean sweeps
Your ships, and speeds them o'er its deeps.
Then speak, and from your palace here

[1] By "Die bunten Vögel" of the original, "birds of gay plumage," Goethe seems to mean the Doll Tearsheets of the neighbouring port.

Your arm clasps either hemisphere.
From this spot dated all the good —
'Twas here the first log-cabin stood:
A tiny trench was cut — no more —
Where plashes now the busy oar.
Your people's toil, your master-brain,
Have wrung this prize from land and main.
From here too —

FAUST.

That accursèd here!
'Tis this which makes my heart so sick.
I needs must whisper in your ear,
It gnaws me, stings me to the quick;
The thought I can nor bear nor crush,
Yet must at the avowal blush —
The old folks must turn out up there.
I want that lime-grove for a site;
These few trees, not my own, they quite
The charm of all I own impair.
There, far and wide around to gaze,
From bough to bough I'd scaffolds raise,
Whence should be opened to the view
All that I've done, broad vistas through,
And at a glance might be surveyed
The master-work man's soul has made,
Winning, by well-concerted plan,
A wide and fertile home for man.
So we are kept upon the rack —
'Midst riches feeling what we lack.
The tinkling bell, the limes' perfume,
Haunt me like crypt's or church's gloom.
The will, with which no mortal copes,
Is broken on these sandy slopes!
How of the thought to be beguiled?
There goes the bell, and I am wild!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Of course, a great chagrin like this
Is gall and wormwood in your bliss.
Who but will own, this clink-clank must
Fill every fine ear with disgust;
And this curst ding-dong-bell, that shrouds
The cheerful evening sky with clouds,
Mingles with each event and mood
Down to the grave from babyhood,
Till life 'twixt ding and dong doth seem
The chaos of a faded dream.

FAUST.

Marred at its height is our success,
By merely wilful stubbornness,
So that in angry, deep disgust,
One tires at last of being just.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why fret? Have you this many a year
Not worked at colonising here?

FAUST.

Go then — away the old folks clear!
The pretty little farm you know
I picked out for them long ago.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We'll bear them off, and plant them there
Quite snug, or ever they're aware:
A pretty home, at any rate,
For usage rough will compensate.

[*Whistles shrilly; enter* THE THREE.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Come on! your lord's behests complete,
And he'll to-morrow feast the fleet.

THE THREE.

He gave us scurvy welcome. Least
He owes us is a rattling feast.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*ad spectatores*).

Here, too, befalls what long ago befell;
For we've a Naboth's vineyard here as well.

DEEP NIGHT.

LYNCEUS (*sings on the watch-tower*).

For my keen vision noted,
Set to watch day and night,
To my tower devoted,
The world's my delight.
I scan the far forces,
I mark what is near,
Moon, stars in their courses,
The woodlands, the deer.
Thus a charm never-failing
I see all around,
And I am glad, hailing
The joy I have found.
O happy eyes, never
Unblest; for whate'er
Ye have looked on, wherever
It met ye, was fair. [*Pause.*

Not for my enjoyment merely
Am I stationed here so high;

From the dark what horror drearly
Breaks with menace on mine eye?
Fire-flakes shooting up, I scan them
Through the lindens' twofold night;
Fiercelier, as the wind-gusts fan them,
Rage the flames, and flash more bright.
Ah, the cot's on fire, unheeded,
Damp it was and moss-o'ergrown;
Sorely swiftest help is needed,
Help or succour there is none.
Ah, the good old man and mother!
Erst so careful they of fire,
They will perish in the smother —
Perish, oh, disaster dire!
All aglow within the lonely
Dark hut! Flames around it swell!
Oh, if these good souls might only
'Scape from out yon blazing hell!
Tongues of flame shoot up and flicker
'Twixt the leaves and branches green,
Withered boughs, consuming quicker,
Blaze awhile, then fall between.
Eyes, shall you see this? Ah, me!
Must I so far-sighted be?
Crushed by falling branches, crashes
Down the chapel to the ground;
The steeple now with forkèd flashes,
Coiling serpent-like, is crowned.
Down to their roots the tree-trunks blighted
Glow red in the fiery blast! [*Long pause.* *Song.*
What erewhile the eye delighted
Hence hath with the ages passed.

FAUST (*on the balcony, facing the dunes*).

Aloft there what a cry of wailing!
Words and moans are now too late;

The warder grieves: though unavailing,
My grief for this rash act is great.
But though the linden-grove, ablaze there,
Lie all in ruin charred and black,
A stately tower I'll quickly raise there,
To look from far as eye can track.
There, too, I see the new home folding
Within its walls the aged pair,
Who, gratefully my care beholding,
Shall end their days in comfort there.

MEPHISTOPHELES *and* THE THREE *below.*

We've come as fast as we could hie!
Your pardon! Things have gone awry.
We knocked and kicked, and kicked and knocked,
And still the door they kept it locked.
We knocked and knocked, we shook it well,
And then the rotten fabric fell.
We shouted, threatened, loud and clear,
But could not make the people hear.
And, as folks do in such a mood,
Hear us they neither did nor would;
But we, remembering what you said,
Soon turned the old souls out of bed.
They made the business easy quite, —
Down dead they fell, of simple fright.
A stranger whom they had aboard,
And who showed fight, was quickly floored.
In the short scrimmage — it fell out —
From cinders, that got strewn about,
The thatch caught fire. 'Tis blazing free,
A funeral-pyre for all the three.

FAUST.

No ear to my commands you lent!
Not plunder, but exchange, I meant.

This brutal outrage, mad and worse,
I curse it! Hence! and 'mong you share my curse!

CHORUS.

The ancient saw, we have it here:
To might give still a ready ear!
If bold, and reckless what befall,
Risk house and home, yourself — and all!

[*Exeunt.*

FAUST.

The stars conceal their sheen and glow,
The fire begins to smoulder low;
A chilly breeze upon its wings
To me the smoke and smother brings.
Rash hest, too recklessly obeyed!
What there comes hovering like some spectral shade?

[*Draws back.*

Enter FOUR GRAY WOMEN.

FIRST.

My name, it is WANT.

SECOND.

And mine, it is BLAME.

THIRD.

Mine, CARE!

FOURTH.

NECESSITY, that is my name.

THREE (*speaking together*).

The door it is bolted, we cannot go in;
A rich man dwells there, and we may not within.

WANT.

I fade to a shade there.

BLAME.

There I cease to be.

NECESSITY.

There the eye is too dainty to look upon me.

CARE.

Ye sisters, ye neither can enter, nor dare;
But the keyhole's a portal sufficient for Care.

[CARE *disappears*

WANT.

Gray sisters, away! Here no more may we bide.

BLAME.

Where you go, there I go, and stick by your side.

NECESSITY.

On your heels I will follow, Necessity saith.

THE THREE.

The clouds they roll up, disappears star on star.
Behind there, behind! From afar, from afar!
He is coming, our brother is coming — Death!

FAUST (*within the palace*).

I saw four come, and only three go hence.
Some words I heard, but could not catch the sense.
Necessity, said one, with muttered breath,
And then there came a rhyme ill-omened — DEATH:
A dull dead sound, of ghostly note, methought.
Not yet have I my way to freedom fought!

Could I sweep magic from my path, forego
The spells of sorcery one and all, and grow
A man unwarped by creed or care or wile,
Then, then, to be a man were worth the while!
Such was I once, ere I my studies fed
With the dark lore of arts inhibited —
Ere my chagrin in impious frenzy burst,
And mine own self and all the world I curst.
So now the very air do phantasms fill,
That how to 'scape them passes mortal skill.
Yea, if for us one day hath cheering gleams,
Night wilders us with spirit-haunted dreams.
The fresh green fields have made our pulses dance;
Then croaks a bird: what does it croak? — Mischance!
Clasped soon and late in Superstition's arms,
It will be heard, it haunts us, it alarms:
And so we stand alone, scared, trembling, dumb.
I heard the door creak; in has no one come.
[*Shaken with apprehension.*
Is some one here?

CARE.

So asked, I say, There is!

FAUST.

Who, then, art thou?

CARE.

Enough that here I be!

FAUST.

Go, get thee hence!

CARE.

My proper place is this.

FAUST (*at first incensed, then softening down*).

Take heed, Faust. Use no spell of wizardrie!

CARE.

Though the ear may hear me not,
Fear is in the heart begot.
In for ever changing guise
Cruel power I exercise;
On the ocean, on the shore,
Sad companion evermore;
Always found, and sought for never,
Cursed, cajoled, and flattered ever!
Care hast thou, then, never known?

FAUST.

I've galloped merely through the world, I own.
Each pleasure by the hair I'd seize,
Cast off whatever failed to please,
What 'scaped me let unheeded go.
First craving, then achieving, then
Longing for something new again;
And stoutly on through life went storming so,
Grandly at first, and foremost in the race,
But sagely now, and at a sober pace.
Of man and earth I know enough; what lies
Beyond is barricaded 'gainst our eyes.
Fool, who with blinking gaze out yonder peers,
And dreams of kindred souls in upper spheres!
Let him stand firm, and look around him here.
Not dumb this world to him that bears a brain:
Why through eternity should he career?
What things he knows will in his grasp remain.
So let him roam on through his earthly day;
Though spirits gibber, calmly hold his way;
And longing still, and still unsatisfied,
Accept his fate, let joy or grief betide.

CARE.

Him I in my gripe have got
All the world availeth not.
Gloom upon him ever lies.
Suns set not for him, nor rise.
Sound in outward sense, and hale,
Darknesses within prevail.
Riches fineless may be his,
Yet he ne'er their master is.
Whim to him are good and ill;
He 'mid plenty hungers still.
Be it joy or be it sorrow,
Off he puts it till to-morrow,
All intent on what's to be,
Evermore unready he.

FAUST.

Have done! This is for thee no place.
Nor me to listen to such trash befits.
Away! That litany so vile, so base,
Might rob the very sagest of his wits.

CARE.

Shall he go? Or shall he come?
Doubt doth his resolve benumb;
On a beaten road, and straight,
He will pause and hesitate;
Lose himself more deeply, view
All things more and more askew.
Burden to himself and others,
Breath he breathes, yet breathing smothers,
Lifeless, though of living kind,
Not despairing, not resigned.
Such an all-adrift career,—
Sad dejection, helpless fear,

Now exulting, now depressed,
Poor enjoyment, broken rest,—
Chains him to the spot that bears him,
And in time for hell prepares him.

FAUST.

O phantoms evil-starred! 'Tis thus you hurt
Man, whensoe'er ye hold him in your fangs;
Even days that might be happy ye pervert
Into a tangle of avoidless pangs.
'Tis hard, I know, from demons to get free;
The strong leash spirits weave few hands may sever;
Yet, mighty and insidious though it be,
Thy power, O Care, I will acknowledge never.

CARE.

Then feel it now! I leave behind
My curse on you, as swift away I wend.
Through their whole lives the race of man is blind;
You, Faust, be blind, now your life nears its end!
[*She breathes upon him.*

FAUST (*blinded*).

Night seems to close in deeper — deepening still;
But all within is radiantly bright;
What I have thought I hasten to fulfil;
The master's bidding, that alone has might.
Up, vassals, from your lairs! Give me to scan
The glad fulfilment of my daring plan.
Up! to your tools! Ply shovel, pick, and spade!
Straight must the work be done, so long delayed.
Stern discipline, and toil intense,
Shall have the amplest recompense.
One mind to guide a thousand hands,
And perfected the work, my noblest, stands!

SCENE IV. — *Great Fore-court of the Palace. Torches.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*as overseer, leading the way*).

This way, this way! Come in, you
  Lemures, stumbling, hobbled, —
Abortions, out of sinew,
  Bone, and tendon cobbled!

LEMURES (*in chorus*).

Here we are at your command!
  We've half heard why we came — it
Is all about a stretch of land,
  And we are to reclaim it.
Sharp-pointed stakes, long chains withal,
  To measure with, we've brought in.
On us why you were pleased to call —
  That we have clean forgotten.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The work here needs no artist-touches nice;
To measure from yourselves will quite suffice.
Let him that's tallest lie upon the ground,
And then you others pile the turf all round.
As for our sires they did, prepare
A sunken pit oblong and square.
Out of the palace to the narrow home —
Such is the sorry end to which they all must come

LEMURES (*digging with elvish gestures*).

In youth when I did live, did love,
  Methought 'twas very sweet;
Where mirth was free, and jollity,
  That place for me was meet.

But age with stealing steps
Hath clawed me with his crutch.
A grave, its door I stumbled o'er;
Why leave they open such?

FAUST (*comes out of the palace, groping by the doorposts*).

The clink of spades! What rapture in the sound!
Hark! multitudes at work to do my bidding,
The soil of what disturbs it ridding,
Imposing on the waves a bound,
And drawing a strong curb the sea around!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*).

Yet all your labour's spent for us alone.
With your fine dams and bulwarks vast,
You're but preparing a superb repast
For Neptune, the sea-fiend, to feast upon.
You're trumped and done for every way,
Into our hands the elements play,
Destruction onward is striding fast.

FAUST.

Inspector!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Here!

FAUST.

Howe'er, where'er you may,
Get labourers, heaps on heaps. Excite
By threats, cajoling, extra pay,
And extra cheer, to work with all their might.
Each day I'd have the tidings brought me, how
The trench is getting on, they're digging now,

MEPHISTOPHELES (*half aloud*).

Their talk to me, it is as if they gave,
Not tidings of a trench, but of — a grave.

FAUST.

The marsh, that spreads hence to the mountain's base,
Empoisons all the land already gained;
But drain the noisome swamp off from the place,
My last, my highest aim were then attained.
Though not quite safe, still there would be broad lands,
Free for the tillage of a million hands!
Fields green and fertile; men and cattle both
Would to the virgin soil draw, nothing loath,
Hedging themselves betimes by dike and mound,
Which their bold busy hands will pile around.
Within, a very paradise; outside,
Howe'er may rage the angry baffled tide,
Striving to sap, to force an entrance, each
And all rush swiftly to close up the breach.
Yes! This one thought absorbs me wholly — rife
With wisdom's final lesson, and most true;
He only merits freedom, merits life,
Who daily has to conquer them anew.
So, girt by danger, shall youth, manhood, age,
Pass kindly here their busy pilgrimage.
Such swarming multitudes I fain would see,
Free people standing on a soil as free;
Then to the passing moment might I say,
"Oh, linger yet, thou art so fair!
So may the traces of my earthly day
Not with the ages fade away in air!"
In the foretaste of such high bliss, I seem
Even now to enjoy that moment all supreme.

[FAUST *sinks back; the* LEMURES *seize him and lay him upon the ground.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Him does no pleasure sate, nor gain content!
From change to change his fancy ever went.
The last vile empty moment fain
Would he, poor creature, as it flies, retain.
He, who defied me with so high a hand,
Time masters him — there lies he on the sand.
The clock stands still —

CHORUS.

Stands still! Hushed as midnight.
The index falls.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

It falls; 'tis finished quite!

CHORUS.

'Tis past!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Pshaw! Past? A stupid phrase! Why past?
Past and pure nothingness are one at last!
What boots this evermore creating, when
Things all sweep into nothingness again?
"There! Now 'tis past!" From this what can we glean?
'Tis all the same as though it ne'er had been;
Yet round and round it goes, as though it were.
Eternal Void I, for my part, prefer.

BURIAL.

LEMUR (*solo*).

Who has with shovel and with spade
Built up the house so vilely?

CHORUS OF LEMURES.

For thee, sad guest, in hempen vest,
'Tis finished much too highly.

LEMUR (*solo*).

Who has so badly furnished it?
Chairs, tables, where are any?

CHORUS OF LEMURES.

'Tis snug and strong, not let for long,
The claimants are so many.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The body's down, and if the spirit would
Only come out, I very quickly should
Show it my blood-writ bond; but nowadays
Men have, alas, so very many ways
Of getting souls out of the devil's clutch!
The old way out of date has grown,
The new we do not fancy much —
Else had I managed all alone.
To help from others I must now resort.
We're altogether in a sorry plight.
Long well-established usage, ancient right,
Who can rely on them, or who, in short,
Trust anything to be what once it was?
Once with the latest breath out came the soul:
Like cat on mouse emerging from its hole,
Snap! and I had it fast within my claws!
Now it hangs back, and is averse to quit
The loathsome corpse, that foully harbours it;
The elements, that hate each other, send
It ignominiously packing in the end.
For days and hours, perplex me how I will,

"When?" "How?" and "Where?" is the sad question still.
Old Death has lost his power so swift and stout,
The "Whether" even hangs tediously in doubt.
Ofttimes on rigid limbs I've gloated, then
Found 'twas all sham: they moved, got up again.
[*Fantastic gestures of conjuration.*
Hither away! Faster than e'er you flew,
Lords of the straight, lords of the crookèd horn,
Chips of the old block, devils bred and born,
And bring the jaws of hell along with you!
Hell has jaws manifold, that gape to suit your
Different shades of dignity and rank:
But people, too, in this their final prank,
Will not be so particular in future.
[*The ghastly jaws of Hell open on the left.*
The corner teeth gape wide; from the abyss
The raging stream of fire leaps forward, and I see,
Through whirling smoke and flames, that roar and hiss,
The City of Fire, where flames eternal be.
Up to the very teeth the blazing eddies play:
The damned swim up in hope to 'scape their doom;
But the Hyena crunches them, and they,
Howling in pain, their fiery path resume.
Much more is left to spy in corners there;
In compass small such agony supreme!
Nought could serve better sinful folk to scare;
But they regard it all as lies, and fraud, and dream.
[*To the stout devils, with short straight horns.*
You of the fiery cheeks, you all aglow,
Full fed on brimstone, fat and broad of beam!
Short, clumsy, stiff-necked, watch you here below
If anything like phosphorus shall gleam.
That is the soul, Psyche with wings; these steal,
'Tis then a loathsome worm, and nothing more.
The moment I have stamped it with my seal,
Off with it to where hell's fires whirl and roar!

The nether regions be your care,
Ye paunches! Duty bids you so.
If the soul had its favourite lodging there,
With certainty one cannot know.
Within the navel it delights to dwell;
'Twill give you thence the slip. So watch that well!
[*To the lean devils, with long crooked horns.*
You giants, capering round with limbs disjointed,
Strike out into the air, no pause, but snatch;
Your arms outstretched, your talons sharply pointed,
That you the flighty, fluttering thing may catch!
It finds, no doubt, its ancient home a bore,
And the first wish of genius is to soar.
[*Glory from above on the right. Heavenly host.*

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Kin to the blest above,
Envoys of heavenly love,
Onwards still follow,
Bearing in trust
Pardon to sinners,
Life to the dust!
With slow-beating wings,
As along ye are sped,
On all living things
Benign influence shed!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I hear discordant sounds, a hideous noise,
Come with the unwelcome radiance from above;
A mawkish chant it is of girls and boys,
Such as your canting tricksters dearly love.
You know how we, by curses agonised,
Plotted destruction to the human race:
The most disgraceful things that we devised
Seem to their pious souls not out of place.

They come, a sneaking, hypocritic set, —
So have they snatched from us full many a prize:
With our own arms they fight us; for what yet
Are they, but devils clothed in masking guise?
Lose here, and you're eternally disgraced.
To the grave! Cling to its margin! Haste ye, haste!

CHORUS OF ANGELS (*scattering roses*).

Roses that dazzle so,
Balm-breathing, living,
Fluttering to and fro,
Inly life giving,
Floating on leafy wing,
Blossoms half opening,
Hasten to blow!
Scatter around you Spring,
Verdure and glow,
Paradise bring
To the sleeper below!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Why do you duck and shrink? Is that hell's wont?
Stand fast, and let them scatter as they may!
Each to his place! Fools, show a steady front
They think, forsooth, with such flower-rubbish they
Can fiery fiends as with snowflakes o'erlay!
Before your breath 'twill shrivel, melt away.
Blow then, ye blowers! Gently, gently there!
The whole troop blench before your scorching air.
Not quite so strong! Shut mouth and nostrils to.
You've blown a deal too fiercely. Pest, that you
To hit the due proportion never learn!
You more than shrivel — you scorch, you wither, burn.
They flutter down with poisonous, piercing flame;
Stand close, and meet them fearlessly! Oh, shame!
What! Quailing still? All courage gone and spent!
A strange, bewitching glow the devils scent.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Flowers, blest and beautiful,
Flames, gladsome, bright,
On hearts that are dutiful
Shed pure delight,
Love every way.
Words with pure truth that ring,
Clear as heavens opening,
To hosts immortal bring
Everywhere day.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Curse on these idiots, ill-bestead!
The Satans turn heels over head!
Round, round like wheels they spin, the paunchy brutes,
And plunge tail-foremost into hell again.
I hope you'll find your well-earned hot bath suits;
But I will here, here at my post remain.
[*Striking aside the roses that hover around him.*
Off, Jack o' Lanterns! Pugh! For all your flash,
Grasped, and what are you but mere loathsome squash?
What! flickering still? Begone with you! They cling
About my neck — like pitch and brimstone sting.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

What with your nature wars,
You must abjure it;
What on your spirit jars,
Do not endure it:
If it will force its way,
Front it we must and may;
Only the loving love
Heavenward can sway.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I burn all over, head, heart, liver, bone!
A hyperdiabolic element! They are
More piercing than the fires of hell by far!
Ha! now I see why ye make such wild moan,
Ye hapless lovers! who, though sweethearts spurn,
To look at them your necks can't choose but turn.
Why to that side is even my head bowed?
I, that to deadly strife with them am vowed!
Time was, to see them set me on the rack.
What strange thing's this has pierced me through and through?
These dear young things are charming to the view;
Why can I curse them not? What holds me back?
And if I let them o'er me mastery get,
Who then henceforward may be called the fool?
The pretty rascals, I detest them, yet
They strike me as by much too beautiful;
Fair children, pray inform me, are you not
Of the great race of Lucifer begot?
You are so pretty, fain I'd kiss you; you,
Methinks, appear at the right moment, too.
It is so nice, so natural, as though
I'd met with you a thousand times before.
You set one's concupiscence all aglow;
Each time I look, you charm me more and more.
Come nearer! Oh, vouchsafe me but one glance!

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Behold us! Why recoil as we advance?
We still advance; if stay thou canst, then stay!
[*The angels drawing around occupy the whole space.*

MEPHISTOPHELES (*who is thrust into the proscenium*).

You rail at us as spirits damned, and you
Are of sheer wizardrie the masters true;

For you lead man and womankind astray.
How cursèd this adventure is!
Love's element, can it be this?
A raging fire fills all my frame;
Scarce on my neck I feel the scorching flame.
You hover to and fro; come down, and sway
Your gracious limbs in somewhat worldlier way.
It suits you well, I grant, that earnest style,
Yet fain I'd see you but one moment smile;
That were for me beyond all utterance sweet:
A smile, I mean, like that when lovers meet.
A slight turn of the mouth — the thing is done.
You there, tall, shapely lad, I like the best:
'Tis wrong to clothe you in a priestly vest.
Give me one loving glance, one, only one!
A scantier robe, too, were more seemly, kind;
These sweeping folds too decent are by far.
They turn about! To view them from behind —
They're quite too toothsome, the young rogues, they are!

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Ye loving flames, quicken
More clearly and calm,
To souls remorse-stricken
Let truth bring a balm!
So themselves from the thrall
Of the ill they may wrest,
Thenceforth in the All-in-all
Merge and be blest!

MEPHISTOPHELES *(pulling himself together)*.

How is't with me? Like Job, from head to heels,
All boils, a horror to one's self; but yet
Triumphant, when one probes himself, and feels
Reliance on himself and on his race.
The noble devil-parts all keep their place;
'Tis but skin-deep this lickerish fuss and fret;

Those plaguey flames already are burnt out,
And now I curse ye all, right round about!

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

The man o'er whom
You, holy flames, brood,
Is purged from death's gloom,
Lives blest with the good.
In unison blending,
Sing, upwards ascending;
The air, it is purified,
Spirit, breathe free!

[*They ascend, bearing away with them the immortal part of* FAUST.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*looking around*).

But how is this? Where have they gone?
Ye milksop chits, you have outwitted me!
Away to heaven they've with their booty flown;
That's why they nibbled at this grave, I see!
Great and unique the prize they have withdrawn
Out of my very fingers. The high soul,
That by its own free act I held in pawn,
They've filched away, clean out of my control.
And now to whom shall I complain? Who, who
Will vindicate for me my well-earned right?
In your old days you've been bamboozled; you
Have well deserved your present direful plight.
I've bungled quite discreditably, — great
Outlay have lost, and shamefully withal;
Let vulgar lust, a silly amorous heat,
The devil's tough well-seasoned self enthral.
If after all that he has seen and known,
He lets such childish stuff his wits benumb,
Not small the folly is, I needs must own,
That to such weakness could at last succumb.

SCENE V. — *Mountain Defiles, Forest, Rock, Wilderness.*

HOLY ANCHORITES.

(*Dispersed along the slopes, stationed among the clefts*).

CHORUS AND ECHO.

Forests are waving here,
Rocks beetle vast and sheer,
Roots to the ground are braced,
Stem thick with stem enlaced;
Brooks leap and sparkle clear,
Sheltering caves darkle near;
Harmlessly gliding round,
Dumb lions roam,
Honour the hallowed ground,
Love's blessèd home.

PATER ECSTATICUS (*hovering up and down*).

Joy evermore burning,
Love's fiery yearning,
Heart-anguish glowing,
God's bliss o'erflowing.
Arrows, pierce through me,
Lances, subdue me,
Clubs, crush, confound me,
Lightnings, flash round me!
Kill every trace in me
Of what is base in me!
Shine, star, evermore,
Eternal love's core!

PATER PROFUNDUS (*lower region*).

As the rock chasm here at my feet
Rests all its weight on yon deep chasm beneath;

As countless sparkling rills together meet,
Ere in the torrent's fall they foam and seethe;
As the tree-stem shoots evermore above,
High and more high by its own inward strain,—
Such and so worketh the Almighty Love,
That mouldeth all things, and doth all sustain.
Around me here is a tumultuous roaring,
As though the wood and precipices shook;
And yet 'tis only the delightsome pouring,
Down the steep cleft, of the abounding brook,
Will fertilise anon the valley near.
The lightning, which spread wreck and death before,
Does it not serve to purge the atmosphere,
That vapour in its breast and poison bore?
Envoys of love are these; and they proclaim
What, evermore creating, girds us round.
Oh, may't in me, too, light a holy flame,
When my chilled soul, in chains of anguish bound,
Perplexed with thronging doubts, and ill at ease,
Is tossing to and fro, and sunk in gloom!
O God, my torturing thoughts appease,
My hungering heart illume!

PATER SERAPHICUS (*middle region*).

Through the pine-trees' waving tresses,
Lo, a dawn-cloud onward rolls!
And within it, such my guess, is
Borne a choir of infant souls.

CHORUS OF BLESSED BOYS.

Tell us whither we are going—
Father, tell us, who are we?
Happy are we; bliss o'erflowing
To us all it is, To Be.

PATER SERAPHICUS.

Boys, at dead of midnight born,
Soul and sense but half awake,
Straightway from your parents torn,
Rank with angel hosts to take!
Come, draw near; obey your feeling:
One is here whose love is true.
Happy ye! no trace revealing
Of earth's rugged ways in you.
Drop into my eyes, an organ
Fit for man and earthly sphere;
Use them as your own, to gaze on
All that lies around us here!
[*He takes them into himself.*[1]
These are trees; these, rocky ridges;
This a river, that its steep
Down-rush to the chasm abridges
By one mighty arching leap.

BLESSED BOYS (*from within*).

'Tis all grand, but sad it makes us —
'Tis too sombre, too immense;
With uneasy dread it shakes us, —
Father, father, take us hence!

PATER SERAPHICUS.

Mount to higher spheres supernal,
Ever, all unconscious, grow;

[1] Mr. Bayard Taylor quotes, in an explanatory note on this passage, the following extract from a letter by Goethe in 1806 to Wolf, the author of the "Prolegomena" to Homer: "Why can I not at once, honoured friend, on receiving your letter, sink myself for a short time in your being, like those Swedenborgian spirits who sometimes receive permission to enter into the organs of sense of their master, and through the medium of these to behold the world?"

By God's influence eternal,
Through His presence, strengthened so!
For, sublimed there, reigns the healing
Power, that feeds the spirit's mood;
Everlasting love's revealing,
Quickening pure beatitude.

CHORUS OF BLESSED BOYS (*circling round the top-most peak*).

Hands intertwine in
A circling ring,
Feelings divine in
Gladsomeness sing!
God teaches you; hear Him,
Trust in His grace:
You, who revere Him,
Shall look on His face!

ANGELS (*hovering in the higher sphere, bearing the immortal part of* FAUST).

Rescued from the Evil One
Is our brother's soul here;
Who hath nobly wrestled, run,
Him can we enrol here.
And if 'twas love divine's behest
That sin should not defeat him,
Then will the spirits of the blest
With cordial welcome greet him.

THE YOUNGER ANGELS.

Roses that from hands were sent,
Loving — holy — penitent,
Helped us to inflict defeat,
And our lofty task complete,
Rescuing this precious soul
From the Evil One's control.

As we strewed them on their head,
Demons shrank and devils fled.
Not the wonted pangs of hell,
But love's anguish on them fell.
Even the Arch-Fiend with pain
Quivered, pierced through every vein.
Shout aloud through all the sky!
We have triumphed! Victory!

THE MORE ADVANCED ANGELS.

Alas! still with earthly taint
Is he encumbered,
Not yet with the pure, a saint,
May he be numbered.
When spirit-force strong
Hath the earthly attracted,
And this with itself has
Inwoven and compacted,
No angels can part what
Is twofold, yet one,
By Love Everlasting
This alone may be done.

THE YOUNGER ANGELS.

Round yonder peak on high,
Mist-like and trailing,
Spirits of good I spy
Hitherward sailing.
Now clears the cloud away;
I see a bright array
Circling and soaring,
Boys, blessèd boys they be,
Set from earth's burden free,
Rapt and adoring;
Drinking in quickened life

From all the beauty rife,
Fresh to their gaze unfurled,
Here in the upper world.
Let him, where they begin
Perfected bliss to win,
Be mated with them!

THE BLESSED BOYS.

Him we are fain to
Receive as a chrysalis;
Thus we attain to
The pledge of angelic bliss.
Loosen the films of earth
He is still heir to;
E'en now in his second birth
He is great, — fair too!

DOCTOR MARIANUS (*in the highest, purest cell*).

Here the outlook is free,
The spirit aspiring!
Women I yonder see
Floating up, quiring.
Midmost, in wondrous sheen,
Star-crowned and beaming,
Lo! there is Heaven's queen,
Gloriously gleaming! [*Enraptured.*

Ruler of sky and earth below,
In Thy azure vaulted,
Unto me vouchsafe to show
Thy mystery exalted!
Bless all that in man's heart hath fired
Emotions gentler, dearer,
And, with a saintly love inspired,
To Thee still draws it nearer!

If Thy behests inspire our will,
What then may daunt or curb it?
But if Thou biddest us be still,
Our calm, what may disturb it?
Virgin pure from spot or taint,
Mother, holy, tender,
Queen, elect of us, and saint,
Throned with God in splendour!

Light cloudlets free
Around her are bent;
Women they be,
That have sinned and repent —
Sinned in their weakness
Of nature too tender,
Now in all meekness
Kneeling to render
Lowly contrition,
Imploring remission
Of sins from her grace.

To thee, whom passion could not touch,
Still, still it hath been granted,
That those who fall, through loving much,
May come with trust undaunted.
'Tis hard from ruin to defend
Them, so their weakness blindeth;
And who by his own strength may rend
The fetters passion bindeth!
How on smooth slippery slope the feet
Slide swift to their undoing!
Whom fool not words and glances sweet,
And flattery's subtle wooing?

MATER GLORIOSA *comes floating forward.*

CHORUS OF REPENTANT WOMEN.

Upward thou'rt soaring
To regions eternal;

Hear our imploring,
Thou, peerless, supernal,
Thou rich to o'erflowing
In pardoning grace!

MAGNA PECCATRIX (*St. Luke* vii. 36–50).

By the love, that bent in weeping
O'er thy Son, divinely born,
His feet with balmy teardrops steeping,
Spite of Pharisaic scorn;
By the box, that dropped profusely
Ointment precious, odour fine;
By the tresses clustering loosely,
That did wipe the limbs divine!

MULIER SAMARITANA (*St. John* iv. 4–42).

By the spring, whereto in dim
Far ages Abraham's flocks were led;
By the pitcher's cooling rim,
That touched His lips, the Saviour dread;
By the clear, full source that now
Wells out there in stream abundant,
Through the universe to flow,
Ever sparkling and redundant!

MARIA ÆGYPTIACA.

By that hallowed spot and dear,
Where was laid the Lord Immortal;
By the arm in warning clear
Raised, that thrust me from its portal;
By the forty years I passed,
In deserts lone, of true repentance;
By what on the sand at last
I traced, a blessèd farewell sentence![1]

[1] "Mary of Egypt," says Mr. Bayard Taylor, "is described in the 'Acta Sanctorum' as an infamous woman of Alexandria,

THE THREE.

Thou, who from the greatly sinning
Never dost avert Thy face,
Still for their repentance winning
An eternal resting-place,
To her, who only once forgot
Herself, vouchsafe Thy blessing —
To her, who fell, yet weeted not
Wherein she was transgressing!

UNA PENITENTIUM (*formerly called* GRETCHEN).

Incline, incline,
Thou peerless one, bright
With effulgence of light,
Unto my bliss thy glance benign!
My early love, my lover,
All trial, struggle over,
Returns to me — is mine!

THE BLESSED BOYS (*circling round and drawing near*).

Already us far above
Towers he in might;
Richly our fost'ring love
Will he requite.
From life were we brought, ere
Its lessons could reach us;
But he hath been taught there,
And he will teach us.

who, after seventeen years of vice, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On approaching the door of the Holy Sepulchre, an invisible arm thrust her away. Weeping, overcome with the sudden sense of her unworthiness, she prayed to the Virgin, and was then lifted as by hands and borne into the Temple, and a voice said to her: 'Go beyond the Jordan, and thou wilt find peace.' She went into the desert, where she lived alone forty-eight years, only visited by a monk, who brought her the last Sacrament, and for whom, when she died, she left a message written upon the sand." — *Bayard Taylor's Translation of* "*Faust*" vol. ii. p. 461.

UNA PENITENTIUM.

In rapt amazement he is lost,
  While round the choir celestial shineth;
He grows so like the heavenly host,
  That his fresh life he scarce divineth.
Lo, every bond of earth hath he
  Off with its whilom vesture flung,
And, in celestial panoply
  Arrayed, comes stately forth and young!
Vouchsafe, I may his teacher be —
  Still dazzles him the unwonted light.

MATER GLORIOSA.

Come! Mount to higher spheres! and he
  Will follow, holding thee in sight.

DOCTOR MARIANUS (*prostrate on his face in prayer*).

Touched hearts, that true repentance know,
  Gaze on those pitying eyes,
And, ever grateful, ever grow
  More meet for Paradise!
May every better thought serene
  Be to thy service given!
Oh, bless us, Virgin, Mother, Queen,
  Omnipotent in heaven!

CHORUS MYSTICUS.

All in earth's fleeting state
As symbol is still meant;
Here the inadequate
Grows to fulfilment;
Here is wrought the inscrutable,
To silence that awes us;

Love eternal, immutable,
On, ever on, draws us.[1]

[1] Goethe would have saved a world of futile conjecture had it occurred to him to explain to his friend Eckermann, among the many things in this work which he did explain, what is meant by the two concluding lines —

Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.

Mr. Bayard Taylor says: "I can find no English equivalent for *Ewig-Weibliche* except 'woman-soul,' which will express very nearly the same idea to those who feel the spirit which breathes and burns throughout the scene. Love is the all-uplifting and all-redeeming power on earth and in heaven; and to man it is revealed in its most pure and perfect form through woman. Thus, in the transitory life of earth, it is only a symbol of its diviner being; the possibilities of love, which earth can never fulfil, become realities in the higher life which follows; the spirit, which woman interprets to us here, still draws us upward (as Margaret draws the soul of Faust) there." After all, does this mean more than a suggestion, that love, the feminine element ("not to speak it profanely") in the Divine Being is ever working through eternity to draw His creatures onward and upward to a higher and purer state of being?

Clavigo

Introduction to Clavigo

THE story on which Clavigo is founded is not only an authentic one, but the circumstances occurred only ten years before the publication of the play. They are as follows: Beaumarchais (the well-known French writer) had two sisters living in Madrid, one married to an architect, the other, Marie, engaged to Clavijo, a young author without fortune. No sooner had Clavijo obtained an office which he had long solicited than he refused to fulfil his promise. Beaumarchais hurried to Madrid; his object was twofold: to save the reputation of his sister, and to put a little speculation of his own on foot. He sought Clavijo, and by his *sang-froid* and courage extorted from him a written avowal of his contemptible conduct. No sooner is this settled than Clavijo, alarmed at the consequences, solicits a reconciliation with Marie, offering to marry her. Beaumarchais consents, but just as the marriage is about to take place he learns that Clavijo is secretly conspiring against him, accusing him of having extorted the marriage by force, in consequence of which he has procured an order from the government to expel Beaumarchais from Madrid. Irritated at such villainy, Beaumarchais goes to the ministers, reaches the king, and avenges himself by getting Clavijo dismissed from his post.

This story was published by Beaumarchais under title of a "Mémoire," in the year 1774; the circumstances having occurred in 1764. Goethe once, at a

friendly meeting, read the recently published Mémoire, and in the conversation that ensued promised to produce a play on the subject in the course of the following week. He fulfilled his promise, and it will be seen how closely, with the exception of the tragic *dénouement*, he adhered to the original story. The real Clavijo subsequently became a man of considerable eminence in Madrid, though Goethe could not have been aware of his existence when he wrote the play.[1]

It belongs to the period just after the composition of "Werther," and is one of the less important of his literary works; but the exceedingly dramatic presentation of the incidents has given it great popularity on the German stage, and helped considerably to establish the fame of the author.

[1] The above details are derived from Mr. G. H. Lewes's "Life of Goethe."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CLAVIGO.
CARLOS, his friend.
BEAUMARCHAIS.
MARIE BEAUMARCHAIS.
SOPHIE GUILBERT (née BEAUMARCHAIS).
GUILBERT, her husband.
BUENCO.
ST. GEORGE.

The scene is at Madrid.

Clavigo

ACT I.

SCENE I. — CLAVIGO'S *Dwelling.*

Enter CLAVIGO *and* CARLOS.

CLAVIGO. (*rising up from the writing-table*) The journal will do a good work, it must charm all women. Tell me, Carlos, do you not think that my weekly periodical is now one of the first in Europe?

CARLOS. We Spaniards, at least, have no modern author who unites such great strength of thought, so much florid imagination, with so brilliant and easy a style.

CLAVIGO. Please don't. I must still be among the people the creator of the good style; people are ready to take all sorts of impressions; I have a reputation among my fellow citizens, their confidence: and, between ourselves, my acquirements extend daily; my experience widens, and my style becomes ever truer and stronger.

CARLOS. Good, Clavigo! Yet, if you will not take it ill, your paper pleased me far better when you yet wrote it at Marie's feet, when the lovely cheerful creature had still an influence over you. I know not how, the whole had a more youthful blooming appearance.

CLAVIGO. Those were good times, Carlos, which are now gone. I gladly avow to thee, I wrote then with opener heart; and, it is true, she had a large share in the approbation which the public accorded me at the very beginning. But at length, Carlos, one becomes very soon weary of women; and were you not the first to applaud my resolution, when I determined to forsake her?

CARLOS. You would have become rusty. Women are far too monotonous. Only, it seems to me, it were again time that you cast about for a new plan, for it is all up when one is so entirely aground.

CLAVIGO. My plan is the court; there there is no leisure nor holiday. For a stranger, who, without standing, without name, without fortune, came here, have I not already advanced far enough? Here in a court! amid the throng of men, where it is not easy to attract attention? I do so rejoice, when I look on the road I have left behind me. Loved by the first in the kingdom! Honoured for my attainments, my rank! Recorder of the king! Carlos, all that spurs me on! I were nothing if I remained what I am. Forward! forward! There it costs toil and art! One needs all his wits; and the women! the women! one loses far too much time with them.

CARLOS. Simpleton, that is your fault. I can never live without women, and they are not in my way at all. Moreover, I do not say so very many fine things to them, I do not amuse myself entire months with sentiment and such like; for I do not at all like to have to do with prudish girls. One has soon said his say with them: afterward, if you have carried on with them for awhile, scarcely have they been warmed up a little, when straightway — the deuce — you are pestered with thoughts of marriage and promises of marriage, which I fear as the plague. You are pensive, Clavigo?

CLAVIGO. I cannot get rid of the recollection that I jilted, deceived Marie, call it as you will.

CARLOS. Wonderful! It seems to me, however, that one lives only once in this world, has only once this power, these prospects, and he who does not make the most of them, and rise as high as possible, is a fool. And to marry! to marry just at the time when life is for the first time about to soar aloft on widespread pinions! to bury one's self in domestic repose, to shut one's self up when one has not traversed the half of his journey — has not yet achieved the half of his conquests! To love her was natural; to promise her marriage was folly, and if you had kept your word it would have been downright madness.

CLAVIGO. Hold! I do not understand men. I loved her truly, she drew me to her, she held me, and as I sat at her feet I vowed to her — I vowed to myself — that it should ever be so, that I would be hers as soon as I had an office, a position — and now, Carlos!

CARLOS. It will be quite time enough when you are a made man, when you have reached the desired goal, if then — to crown and confirm all your happiness — you seek to ally yourself by a prudent marriage with a family of wealth and consequence.

CLAVIGO. She has vanished! quite out of my heart vanished, and if her unhappiness does not sometimes remind me — strange that one is so changeable!

CARLOS. If one were constant I should wonder. Look, pray, does not everything in the world change? Why should our passions endure? Be tranquil; she is not the first jilted girl, nor the first that has consoled herself. If I were to advise you, there is the young widow over the way —

CLAVIGO. You know I do not set much store on such proposals. A love affair which does not come of its own accord has no charm for me.

CARLOS. So dainty people!

CLAVIGO. Be it so, and forget not that our chief work at present is, to render ourselves necessary to the new minister. That Whal resigns the government of India is troublesome enough for us. In truth, otherwise it does not disquiet me; his influence abides — Grimaldi and he are friends, and we know how to talk and manœuvre.

CARLOS. And think and do what we will.

CLAVIGO. That is the grand point in the world. (*Rings for the servant.*) Take this sheet to the printing-office.

CARLOS. Are you to be seen in the evening?

CLAVIGO. I do not think so. However, you can inquire.

CARLOS. This evening I should like to undertake something which gladdened my heart; all this afternoon I must write again, there is no end of it.

CLAVIGO. Have patience. If we did not toil for so many persons we would not get the ascendancy over so many. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. — GUILBERT'S *Dwelling.*

SOPHIE GUILBERT, MARIE, *and* DON BUENCO.

BUENCO. You have had a bad night?

SOPHIE. I told her so yesterday evening. She was so foolishly merry and prattled till eleven, then she was overheated, could not sleep, and now again she has no breath and weeps the whole morning.

MARIE. Strange that our brother comes not! It is two days past the time.

SOPHIE. Only have patience, he will not fail us.

MARIE. (*rising*) How anxious I am to see this brother, my avenger and my saviour. I scarcely remember him.

SOPHIE. Indeed! Oh, I can well picture him to myself; he was a fiery, open, brave boy of thirteen when our father sent us here.

MARIE. A noble great soul. You have read the letter which he wrote when he learnt my unhappiness; each character of it is enshrined in my heart. "If you are guilty," writes he, "expect no forgiveness; over and above your misery the contempt of a brother will fall heavy upon you, and the curse of a father. If you are innocent, oh, then, all vengeance, all, all glowing vengeance on the traitor!" I tremble! He will come. I tremble, not for myself, I stand before God in my innocence! You must, my friends — I know not what I want! O Clavigo!

SOPHIE. You will not listen! You will kill yourself.

MARIE. I will be still. Yes, I will not weep. It seems to me, however, I could have no more tears. And why tears? I am only sorry that I make my life bitter to you. For when all is said and done, what have I to complain of? I have had much joy as long as our old friend still lived. Clavigo's love has caused me much joy, perhaps more than mine for him. And now what is it after all? of what importance am I? What matters it if a girl's heart is broken? What matters it whether she pines away and torments her poor young heart?

BUENCO. For God's sake, mademoiselle!

MARIE. Whether it is all one to *him* — that he loves me no more? Ah! why am I not more amiable? But *he* should pity, at least pity me! — that the hapless girl, to whom he had made himself so needful, now without him should pine and weep her life away — Pity! I wish not to be pitied by this man.

SOPHIE. If I could teach you to despise him — the worthless, detestable man.

MARIE. No, sister, worthless he is not; and must I then despise him whom I hate? Hate! Indeed, some-

times I can hate him — sometimes, when the Spanish spirit possesses me. Lately, oh! lately, when we met him, his look wrought full, warm love in me! And as I again came home, and his manner recurred to me, and the calm, cold glance that he cast over me, while beside the brilliant donna; then I became a Spaniard in my heart, and seized my dagger and poison, and disguised myself. Are you amazed, Buenco? All in thought only, of course!

SOPHIE. Foolish girl!

MARIE. My imagination led me after him. I saw him as he lavished all the tenderness, all the gentleness at the feet of his new love — the charms with which he poisoned me — I aimed at the heart of the traitor! Ah! Buenco! — all at once the good-hearted French girl was again there, who knows of no love-sickness, and no daggers for revenge. We are badly off! Vaudevilles to entertain our lovers, fans to punish them, and, if they are faithless? — Say, sister, what do they do in France when lovers are faithless?

SOPHIE. They curse them.

MARIE. And —

SOPHIE. And let them go their ways.

MARIE. Go! — and why shall not I let Clavigo go? If that is the French fashion, why shall it not be so in Spain? Why shall a Frenchwoman not be a Frenchwoman in Spain? We will let him go, and take to ourselves another; it appears to me they do so with us, too.

BUENCO. He has broken a sacred promise, and no light love-affair, no friendly attachment. Mademoiselle, you are pained, hurt even to the depths of your heart. Oh! never was my position of an unknown, peaceful citizen of Madrid so burdensome, so painful as at this moment, in which I feel myself so feeble, so powerless to obtain justice for you against the treacherous courtier!

MARIE. When he was still Clavigo, not yet recorder of the king; when he was still the stranger, the guest, the newcomer in our house, how amiable he was, how good! How all his ambition, all his desire to rise, seemed to be a child of his love! For me he struggled for name, rank, fortune; he has all now, and I!—

GUILBERT *comes.*

GUILBERT. (*privately to his wife*) Our brother is coming!

MARIE. My brother? (*She trembles; they conduct her to a seat.*) Where? where? Bring him to me! Take me to him!

BEAUMARCHAIS *comes.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. My sister! (*Quitting the eldest to rush toward the youngest.*) My sister! My friends! O my sister!

MARIE. Is it you, indeed? God be thanked it is you!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Let me regain composure.

MARIE. My heart!— my poor heart!

SOPHIE. Be calm. Dear brother, I hoped to see you more tranquil.

BEAUMARCHAIS. More tranquil! Are you, then, tranquil? Do I not behold in the wasted figure of this dear one, in your tearful eyes, your sorrowful paleness, in the dead silence of your friends, that you are as wretched as I have imagined you to be during all the long way? and more wretched; for I see you, I hold you in my arms; your presence redoubles my sufferings. O my sister!

SOPHIE. And our father?

BEAUMARCHAIS. He blesses you, and me, if I save you.

BUENCO. Sir, permit one unknown, who, at the first look, recognises in you a noble, brave man, to bear witness to the deep interest which all this matter inspires in me. Sir, you undertake this long journey to save, to avenge your sister! Welcome! be welcome as a guardian angel, though, at the same time, you put us all to the blush!

BEAUMARCHAIS. I hoped, sir, to find in Spain such hearts as yours; that encouraged me to take this step. Nowhere, nowhere in the world are feeling, congenial souls wanting, if only one steps forward whose circumstances leave him full freedom to carry his courage through. And oh, my friends, I feel full of hope! Everywhere there are men of honour among the powerful and great, and the ear of majesty is rarely deaf; only our voice is almost always too weak to reach to their height.

SOPHIE. Come, sister! come, rest a moment. She is quite beside herself. [*They lead her away.*

MARIE. My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. God willing, if you are innocent, then all, all vengeance on the traitor! (*Exeunt* MARIE *and* SOPHIE.) My brother! — my friends! — I see it in your looks that you are so. Let me regain composure and then! — a pure impartial recital of the whole story. This must determine my actions. The feeling of a good cause shall confirm my courage; and, believe me, if we are right, we shall get justice.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — CLAVIGO'S *House.*

CLAVIGO. Who may these Frenchmen be, that have got themselves announced in my house? Frenchmen! In former days this nation was welcome to me!

And why not now? It is singular that a man who sets so much at nought is yet bound with feeble thread to a single point. It is too much! And did I owe more to Marie than to myself? and is it a duty to make myself unhappy because a girl loves me?

A SERVANT.

SERVANT. The foreign gentlemen, sir.

CLAVIGO. Bid them enter. Pray, did you tell their servant that I expect them to breakfast?

SERVANT. As you ordered.

CLAVIGO. I shall be back presently. [*Exit.*

BEAUMARCHAIS — ST. GEORGE.

The SERVANT *places chairs for them and withdraws.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. I feel so much at ease; so content, my friend, to be at length here, to hold him; he shall not escape me. Be calm: at least show him a calm exterior. My sister! my sister! who could believe that you are as innocent as you are unhappy? It shall come to light; you shall be terribly avenged! And Thou, good God! preserve to me the tranquillity of soul which Thou accordest to me at this moment, that, amid this frightful grief, I may act as prudently as possible and with all moderation.

ST. GEORGE. Yes; this wisdom — all the prudence, my friend, you have ever shown — I claim now. Promise me once more, dear friend, that you will reflect where you are. In a strange kingdom, where all your protectors, all your money cannot secure you from the secret machinations of worthless foes.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Be tranquil: play your part well; he shall not know with which of us he has to do. I will torture him! Oh, I am just in a fine humour to roast this fellow over a slow fire!

CLAVIGO *returns.*

CLAVIGO. Gentlemen, it gives me joy to see in my house men of a nation that I have always esteemed.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sir, I wish that we, too, may be worthy of the honour which you are good enough to confer on our fellow countrymen.

ST. GEORGE. The pleasure of making your acquaintance has surmounted the fear of being troublesome to you.

CLAVIGO. Persons, whom the first look recommends, should not push modesty so far.

BEAUMARCHAIS. In truth it cannot be a novelty to you to be sought out by strangers; for by the excellence of your writings, you have made yourself as much known in foreign lands as the important offices which his Majesty has entrusted to you distinguish you in your fatherland.

CLAVIGO. The king looks with much favour on my humble services, and the public with much indulgence on the trifling essays of my pen; I have wished that I could contribute in some measure to the improvement of taste, to the propagation of the sciences in my country; for they only unite us with other nations, they only make friends of the most distant spirits, and maintain the sweetest union among those even, who, alas! are too often disunited through political interests.

BEAUMARCHAIS. It is captivating to hear a man so speak who has equal influence in the state and in letters. I must also avow you have taken the word out of my mouth and brought me straight to the purpose, on account of which you see me here. A society of learned, worthy men has commissioned me, in every place through which I travel and find opportunity, to establish a correspondence between them and the best minds in the kingdom. As no Spaniard writes better than the author of the journal called the *Thinker* — a

man with whom I have the honour to speak (CLAVIGO *makes a polite bow*), and who is an especial ornament of learned men, since he has known how to unite with his literary talents so great a capacity for political affairs, he cannot fail to climb the highest steps of which his character and acquirements render him worthy. I believe I can perform no more acceptable service to my friends than to put them in connection with a man of such merit.

CLAVIGO. No proposal in the world could be more agreeable to me, gentlemen; I thereby see fulfilled the sweetest hopes, with which my heart was often occupied without any prospect of their happy accomplishment. Not that I believe I shall be able, through my correspondence, to satisfy the wishes of your learned friends; my vanity does not go so far. But as I have the happiness to be in accordance with the best minds in Spain, as nothing can remain unknown to me which is achieved in our vast kingdom by isolated, often obscure, individuals for the arts and sciences, I have looked upon myself, till now, as a kind of colporteur, who possesses the feeble merit of rendering the inventions of others generally useful; but now I become, through your intervention, a merchant, happy enough through the exportation of native products to extend the renown of his fatherland and thereby to enrich it with foreign treasures. So then, allow me, sir, to treat as not a stranger a man who, with such frankness, brings such agreeable news; allow me to ask what business — what project made you undertake this long journey? It is not that I would, through this officiousness, gratify vain curiosity; no, believe rather that it is with the purest intention of exerting in your behalf all the resources, all the influence which I may perchance possess; for I tell you beforehand, you have come to a place where countless difficulties encounter a stranger in

the prosecution of his business, especially at the court.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I accept so obliging an offer with warmest thanks. I have no secrets with you, sir, nor will this friend be in the way during my statement; he is sufficiently acquainted with what I have to say. (CLAVIGO *looks at* ST. GEORGE *with attention.*) A French merchant, with a large family and a limited fortune, had many business friends in Spain. One of the richest came to Paris fifteen years ago, and made him this proposal: "Give me two of your daughters, and I shall take them with me to Madrid and provide for them. I am not married, am getting old and have no relatives; they will form the happiness of my declining years, and after my decease I shall leave them one of the most considerable establishments in Spain. The eldest and one of the younger sisters were confided to his care. The father undertook to supply the house with all kinds of French merchandise which might be required, and so all went well till the friend died without the least mention of the Frenchwomen in his will, who then saw themselves in the embarrassing position of superintending alone a new business. The eldest had meanwhile married, and notwithstanding their moderate fortune, they secured through their good conduct and varied accomplishments a multitude of friends who were eager to extend their credit and business. (CLAVIGO *becomes more and more attentive.*) About the same time a young man, a native of the Canary Islands, had got himself introduced into the family. (CLAVIGO'S *countenance loses all cheerfulness, and his seriousness changes gradually into embarrassment, more and more visible.*) Despite his humble standing and fortune they received him kindly. The Frenchwomen, remarking in him a great love of the French language, favoured him with every means of making rapid progress in its study.

Extremely anxious to make himself known, he forms the design of giving to the city of Madrid the pleasure, hitherto unknown to Spain, of reading a weekly periodical in the style of the English *Spectator*. His lady friends fail not to aid him in every way; they do not doubt that such an undertaking would meet with great success; in short, animated by the hope of soon becoming a man of some consequence, he ventures to make an offer of marriage to the younger. Hopes are held out to him. "Try to make your fortune," quoth the elder, "and if an appointment, the favour of the court, or any other means of subsistence shall have given you a right to think of my sister, if she still prefers you to other suitors, I cannot refuse you my consent." (CLAVIGO, *covered with confusion, moves uneasily on his seat.*) The younger declines several advantageous offers; her fondness for the man increases, and helps her to bear the anxiety of an uncertain expectation; she interests herself for his happiness as for her own, and encourages him to issue the first number of his periodical, which appears under an imposing title. (CLAVIGO *is terribly embarrassed.* BEAUMARCHAIS, *icy cold.*) The success of the journal was astonishing; the king even, delighted with this charming production, gave the author public tokens of his favour. He was promised the first honourable office that might be vacant. From that moment he removed all rivals from his beloved, while quite openly striving hard to win her good graces. The marriage was delayed only in expectation of the promised situation. At last, after six years' patient waiting, unbroken friendship, aid, and love on the part of the girl; after six years' devotion, gratitude, attentions, solemn assurances on the part of the man, the office is forthcoming — and he vanishes. (CLAVIGO *utters a deep sigh, which he tries to stifle, and is quite overcome.*) The matter had made so great a noise in the world that the issue could not be regarded

with indifference. A house had been rented for two families. The whole town was talking of it. The hearts of all friends were wrung and sought revenge. Application was made to powerful protectors; but the worthless fellow, already initiated in the cabals of the court, knew how to render fruitless all their efforts, and went so far in his insolence as to dare to threaten the unhappy ladies; to dare to say, in the very face of those friends who had gone to find him, that the Frenchwomen should take care; he defied them to injure him, and if they made bold to undertake aught against him, it would be easy for him to ruin them in a foreign land, where they would be without protection and help. At this intelligence the poor girl fell into convulsions, which threatened death. In the depth of her grief, the elder wrote to France about the public outrage which had been done to them. The news most powerfully moves her brother; he demands leave of absence to obtain counsel and aid in so complicated an affair, he flies from Paris to Madrid, and the brother — it is I! who have left all — my country, duties, family, standing, pleasures, in order to avenge, in Spain, an innocent, unhappy sister. I come, armed with the best cause and firm determination to unmask a traitor, to mark with bloody strokes his soul on his face, and the traitor — art thou!

CLAVIGO. Hear me, sir — I am — I have — I doubt not —

BEAUMARCHAIS. Interrupt me not. You have nothing to say to me and much to hear from me. Now, to make a beginning, have the goodness, in the presence of this gentleman, who has come from France expressly with me, to declare whether my sister has deserved this public outrage from you through any treachery, levity, weakness, rudeness, or any other blemish.

CLAVIGO. No, sir. Your sister, Donna Maria, is a lady overflowing with wit, amiability, and goodness.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Has she ever during your acquaintance given you any occasion to complain of her or to esteem her less?

CLAVIGO. Never! never!

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*rising*) And why, monster, had you the barbarity to torture the girl to death? Only because her heart preferred you to ten others, all more honourable and richer than you?

CLAVIGO. Ah, sir! If you knew how I have been instigated; how I, through manifold advisers and circumstances —

BEAUMARCHAIS. Enough! (*To* ST. GEORGE.) You have heard the vindication of my sister; go and publish it. What I have further to say to the gentleman, needs no witnesses. (CLAVIGO *rises.* ST. GEORGE *retires.*) Stay! Stay! (*Both sit down again.*) Having now got so far, I shall make a proposal to you, which I hope you will accept. It is equally agreeable to you and to me that you do not wed Marie, and you are deeply sensible that I have not come to play the part of a theatrical brother, who will unravel the drama, and present a husband to his sister. You have cast a slur upon an honourable lady in cold blood because you supposed that in a foreign land she was without prop and avenger. Thus acts a base, worthless fellow. And so, first of all, testify with your own hand, spontaneously, with open doors, in presence of your servants, that you are an abominable man, who have deceived, betrayed my sister without the least cause; and with this declaration I will set out for Aranjuez, where our ambassador resides; I will show it, get it printed, and the day after to-morrow the court and the town shall be flooded with it. I have powerful friends here, I have time and money, and of all shall I avail myself to pursue you in the most furious

manner possible till the resentment of my sister is appeased and satisfied, and she herself says "Stop."

CLAVIGO. I will not make such a declaration.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I believe you, for in your place I should, perhaps, not make it either. But here is the reverse of the medal. If you do not write it I shall remain beside you, from this moment I shall not quit you. I shall follow you everywhere, till you, disgusted with such society, will have sought to get rid of me behind Buenretiro. If I am more fortunate than you, without seeing the ambassador, without speaking here with any one, I take my dying sister in my arms, place her in my carriage, and return to France with her. Should fate favour you, I am played out, and you may have a laugh at our expense. Meanwhile, breakfast. (BEAUMARCHAIS *rings the bell.* *An* ATTENDANT *brings the chocolate.* BEAUMARCHAIS *takes a cup, and walks in the adjoining gallery, examining the pictures.*)

CLAVIGO. Air! air! I have been surprised and seized like a boy. Where are you then, Clavigo? How will you end this? How can you end it? Frightful position, into which your folly, your treachery has plunged you! (*He seizes his sword on the table.*) Ha! short and good! (*Lays it down.*) And is there no way, no means, but death? — or murder? — horrible murder! To deprive the hapless lady of her last solace, her only stay, her brother! To see gushing out the blood of a noble, brave man! And to draw upon yourself the double, insupportable curse of a ruined family! O, this was not the prospect when this amiable creature, even from your first meeting, attracted you with so many winsome ways! And when you abandoned her, did you not see the frightful consequences of your crime? What blessedness awaited you in her arms! in the friendship of such a brother! Marie! Marie! O that you could forgive! that at your feet I could atone for all by my tears! —

And why not? — My heart overflows; my soul mounts up in hope! Sir!

BEAUMARCHAIS. What is your determination?

CLAVIGO. Hear me! My deceit toward your sister is unpardonable. Vanity has misled me. I feared by this marriage to ruin all my plans, all my projects for a world-wide celebrity. Could I have known that she had such a brother she would have been in my eyes no unimportant stranger; I should have expected from our union very considerable advantages. You inspire me, sir, with the highest esteem, and, in making me so keenly sensible of my errors, you impart to me a desire, a power, to make all good again. I throw myself at your feet! Help! help, if it is possible, to efface my guilt and put an end to unhappiness. Give your sister to me, again, sir, give me to her! How happy were I to receive from your hand a wife and the forgiveness of all my faults!

BEAUMARCHAIS. It is too late! My sister loves you no more, and I detest you. Write the desired declaration, that is all that I exact from you, and leave me to provide for a choice revenge.

CLAVIGO. Your obstinacy is neither right nor prudent. I grant you that it does not depend on me, whether I will make good again so irremediable an evil. Whether I can make it good? That rests with the heart of your excellent sister, whether she may again look upon a wretch who does not deserve to see the light of day. Only it is your duty to ascertain that and to conduct yourself accordingly, if your demeanour is not to resemble the inconsiderate passion of a young man. If Donna Maria is immovable. O, I know her heart! O, her good, heavenly soul hovers before me quite vividly! If she is inexorable, then it is time, sir.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I insist on the vindication.

CLAVIGO. (*approaching the table*) And if I seize the sword?

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*advancing*) Good, sir! Excellent, sir!

CLAVIGO. (*holding him back*) One word more! You have the better case: let me have prudence for you. Consider what you are doing. Whether you or I fall, we are irrecoverably lost. Should I not die of pain, of remorse, if your blood were to stain my sword, if I, to complete her wretchedness, bereft her of her brother; and on the other hand — the murderer of Clavigo would not recross the Pyrenees.

BEAUMARCHAIS. The vindication, sir, the vindication!

CLAVIGO. Well! be it so. I will do all to convince you of the upright feeling with which your presence inspires me. I will write the vindication, I will write it at your dictation. Only promise me not to make use of it till I am able to convince Donna Maria of the change and repentance of my heart; till I have spoken to her elder sister; till she has put in a good word for me with my beloved one. Not before, sir.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I am going to Aranjuez.

CLAVIGO. Well, then, till your return, let the vindication remain in your portfolio; if I have not been forgiven, then let your vengeance have full swing. This proposal is just, fair, and prudent; and if you do not agree to it let us then play the game of life and death. And whichever of us two become the victim of his own rashness, you and your poor sister will suffer in any case.

BEAUMARCHAIS. It becomes you to pity those you have made wretched.

CLAVIGO. (*sitting down*) Are you satisfied?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Well, then, I yield the point. But not a moment longer. I shall come back from Aranjuez, shall ask, shall hear! And if they have not forgiven you, which is what I hope and desire, I am off directly with the paper to the printing-office.

CLAVIGO. (*sitting down*) How do you demand it?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sir! in presence of your attendants.

CLAVIGO. Why?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Command only that they be present in the adjoining gallery. It shall not be said that I have constrained you.

CLAVIGO. What scruples!

BEAUMARCHAIS. I am in Spain and have to deal with you.

CLAVIGO. Now then! (*Rings. A* SERVANT.) Call my attendants together, and betake yourselves to the gallery there. (*The* SERVANT *retires. The rest come and occupy the gallery.*) You allow me to write the vindication?

BEAUMARCHAIS. No, sir! Write it, I must beg of you, write it as I dictate it to you. (CLAVIGO *writes.*) "I, the undersigned, Joseph Clavigo, Recorder of the King" —

CLAVIGO. "Of the King."

BEAUMARCHAIS. "Acknowledge that after I was received into the family of Madame Guilbert as a friend" —

CLAVIGO. "As a friend."

BEAUMARCHAIS. "I made her sister, Mademoiselle de Beaumarchais, a promise of marriage, repeated many times, which I have unscrupulously broken." Have you got it down?

CLAVIGO. But, sir!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Have you another expression for it?

CLAVIGO. I should think —

BEAUMARCHAIS. "Unscrupulously broken." What you have done you need not hesitate to write. — "I have abandoned her, without any fault or weakness on her part having suggested a pretext or an excuse for this perfidy."

CLAVIGO. Well!

BEAUMARCHAIS. "On the contrary, the demeanour of the lady has been always pure, blameless, and worthy of all honour."

CLAVIGO. "Worthy of all honour."

BEAUMARCHAIS. "I confess that, through my deceit, the levity of my conversations, the construction of which they were susceptible, I have publicly humiliated this virtuous lady; and on this account I entreat her forgiveness, although I do not regard myself as worthy of receiving it." (CLAVIGO *stops.*) Write! write! "And this testimony of my own free will, and unforced, I have given, with this especial promise, that if this satisfaction should not please the injured lady, I am ready to afford it in every other way required. Madrid."

CLAVIGO. (*rises, beckons to the servants to withdraw, and hands him the paper*) I have to do with an injured, but a noble man. You will keep your word, and put off your vengeance. Only on this consideration, in this hope, I have granted you the shameful document, to which nothing else would have reduced me. But before I venture to appear before Donna Maria, I have resolved to engage some one to put in a word for me, to speak in my behalf — and you are the man.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Do not reckon on that.

CLAVIGO. At least make her aware of the bitter, heartfelt repentance which you have seen in me. That is all, all, that I beg of you; do not deny me this; I should have to choose another less powerful intercessor, and even you owe her anyhow a faithful account. Do tell her how you have found me!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Well! this I can do, this I shall do. Good-bye, then.

CLAVIGO. Farewell! (*He wishes to take his hand;* BEAUMARCHAIS *draws it back.*)

CLAVIGO. (*alone*) So unexpectedly from one position into the other. It is an infatuation, a dream! —

I should not have given this vindication. — It came so quickly, so suddenly, like a thunder-storm!

CARLOS *enters.*

CARLOS. What visit is this you have had? The whole house is astir. What is the matter?

CLAVIGO. Marie's brother.

CARLOS. I suspected it. This old dog of a servant, who was formerly with Guilbert, and who at present acts the spy for me, knew yesterday that he was expected, and found me only this moment. He was here then?

CLAVIGO. An excellent young man.

CARLOS. Of whom we shall soon be rid. Already I have spread nets on his way! — What, then, was the matter? A challenge? An apology? Was he very hot, the fellow?

CLAVIGO. He demanded a declaration that his sister gave me no occasion for the change in my feelings toward her.

CARLOS. And have you granted it?

CLAVIGO. I thought it was best.

CARLOS. Well, very well! Was that all?

CLAVIGO. He insisted on a duel or the vindication.

CARLOS. The latter was the more judicious. Who will risk his life for a boy so romantic? And did he exact the paper with violence?

CLAVIGO. He dictated it to me, and I had to call the servants into the gallery.

CARLOS. I understand! ah! now I have you, little master! That will prove his ruin. Call me a scrivener if in two days I have not the varlet in prison and off for India by the next transport.

CLAVIGO. No, Carlos. The matter stands otherwise than as you think.

CARLOS. What?

CLAVIGO. I hope through his intervention, through my earnest endeavours, to obtain forgiveness from the unhappy girl.

CARLOS. Clavigo!

CLAVIGO. I hope to efface all the past, to heal the breach, and so in my own eyes and in the eyes of the world again to become an honourable man.

CARLOS. The devil! Have you become childish? One can still detect the bookworm in you. — To let yourself be so befooled! Do you not see that that is a stupidly laid plan to entrap you?

CLAVIGO. No, Carlos, he does not wish marriage; they are even opposed to it; she will not listen to aught from me.

CARLOS. That is the very point. No, my good friend, take it not ill; I may, perhaps, in plays have seen a country squire thus cheated.

CLAVIGO. You pain me. I beg you will reserve your humour for my wedding. I have resolved to marry Marie, of my own accord, from the impulse of my heart. All my hope, all my felicity, rests on the thought of procuring her forgiveness. And then away, Pride! Heaven still lies, as before, in the breast of this loved one. All the fame which I acquire, all the greatness to which I rise, will fill me with double joy, for it is shared by the lady who makes me twice a man. Farewell! I must hence. I must at least speak with Guilbert.

CARLOS. Wait only till after dinner.

CLAVIGO. Not a moment. [*Exit.*

CARLOS. (*looking after him in silence for some time*) There, some one is going to burn his fingers again!

ACT III.

SCENE I. — GUILBERT'S *abode.*

SOPHIE GUILBERT, MARIE, BEAUMARCHAIS.

MARIE. You have seen him? All my limbs tremble! You have seen him? I had almost fainted when I heard he was come; and you have seen him? No, I can — I will — no — I can never see him again.

SOPHIE. I was beside myself when he stepped in. For ah! did not I love him as you did, with the fullest, purest, most sisterly love? Has not his estrangement grieved, tortured me? And now, the returning, the repentant one, at my feet! Sister, there is something so charming in his look, in the tone of his voice. He —

MARIE. Never, never more!

SOPHIE. He is the same as ever; has still that good, soft, feeling heart; still even that impetuosity of passion. There is still even the desire to be loved, and the excruciatingly painful torture when love is denied him. All! all! and of thee he speaks, Marie! as in those happy days of the most ardent passion. It is as if your good genius had even brought about this interval of infidelity and separation to break the uniformity and tediousness of a prolonged attachment, and impart to the feeling a fresh vivacity.

MARIE. Do you speak a word for him?

SOPHIE. No, sister. Nor have I promised to do so. Only, dearest, I see things as they are. You and your brother see them in a light far too romantic. You have this experience in common with many a very good girl, that your lover became faithless and forsook you. And that he comes again penitent, will amend

his fault, revive all old hopes — that is a happiness which another would not lightly reject.

MARIE. My heart would break!

SOPHIE. I believe you. The first moment must make a sensible impression on you — and then, my dear, I beseech you, regard not this anxiety, this embarrassment, which seems to overpower all your senses, as a result of hatred and ill-will. Your heart speaks more for him than you suppose, and even on that account you do not trust yourself to see him, because you so anxiously desire his return.

MARIE. Spare me, dearest!

SOPHIE. You should be happy. Did I feel that you despise him, that he is indifferent to you, I would not say another word, he should see my face no more. Yet, as it is, my love, you will thank me that I have helped you to overcome this painful irresolution, which is a token of the deepest love.

GUILBERT, BUENCO.

SOPHIE. Come, Buenco! Guilbert, come! Help me to give this darling courage, resolution, now while we may.

BUENCO. Would that I dared say — receive him again.

SOPHIE. Buenco!

BUENCO. The thought makes my blood boil — that he should still possess this angel, whom he has so shamefully injured, whom he has dragged to the grave. He — possess her? Why? How does he repair all that he has violated? He returns; once more it pleases him to return and say: "Now I may; now I will," just as if this excellent creature were suspected wares, which in the end you toss to the buyer after he has tormented you to the marrow by the meanest offers, and haggling like a Jew. No, my

voice he will never obtain, not even if the heart of Marie herself should speak for him. To return; and why, then, now? — now? — Must he wait till a valiant brother come, whose vengeance he must fear, and, like a schoolboy, come and crave pardon? Ha! he is as cowardly as he is worthless.

GUILBERT. You speak like a Spaniard, and as if you did not know Spaniards. This moment we are in greater danger than any of you perceive.

MARIE. Good Guilbert!

GUILBERT. I honour our brother's bold soul. In silence I have observed his heroic conduct. That all may turn out well, I wish that Marie could resolve to give Clavigo her hand; for — (*smiling*) — her heart he has still.

MARIE. You are cruel.

SOPHIE. Listen to him, I beseech you, listen to him!

GUILBERT. Your brother has wrung from him a declaration which will vindicate you in the eyes of the world and ruin us.

BUENCO. What!

MARIE. O God!

GUILBERT. He gave it in the hope of touching your heart. If you remain unmoved, then he must with might and main destroy the paper. This he can do; this he will do. Your brother will print and publish it immediately after his return from Aranjuez. I fear, if you persist, he will not return.

SOPHIE. My dear Guilbert!

MARIE. It is killing me!

GUILBERT. Clavigo cannot let the paper be published. If you reject his offer, and he is a man of honour, he goes to meet your brother, and one of them falls; and whether your brother perish or triumph he is lost. A stranger in Spain! The murderer of this beloved courtier! My sister, it is all very well to think and feel nobly, but to ruin yourself and yours —

MARIE. Advise me, Sophie; help me!

GUILBERT. And Buenco, contradict me, if you can.

BUENCO. He dares not; he fears for his life; otherwise he would not have written at all; he would not have offered Marie his hand.

GUILBERT. So much the worse. He will get a hundred to lend him their arm; a hundred to take away our brother's life on the way. Ha! Buenco, are you then so young? Should not a courtier have assassins in his pay?

BUENCO. The king is great and good.

GUILBERT. Go, then, traverse the walls which surround him, the guards, the ceremonial, and all that his courtiers have put between his people and him; press through and save us. Who comes?

CLAVIGO *appears.*

CLAVIGO. I must! I must! (MARIE *utters a shriek, and falls into* SOPHIE'S *arms.*)

SOPHIE. Cruel man, in what a position you place us! (GUILBERT *and* BUENCO *draw near to her.*)

CLAVIGO. Yes, it is she! it is she! and I am Clavigo! Listen to me, gentle Marie, if you will not look on me. At the time that Guilbert received me as a friend into his house, when I was a poor unknown youth, and when in my heart I felt for you an overpowering passion, was that any merit in me? or was it not rather an inner harmony of characters, a secret union of soul, so that you neither could remain unmoved by me, and I could flatter myself with the sole possession of this heart? And now — am I not even the same? Are you not even the same? Why should I not venture to hope? Why not entreat? Would you not once more take to your bosom a friend, a lover, whom you had long believed lost, if after a perilous, hapless voyage he returned

unexpectedly and laid his preserved life at your feet? And have I not also tossed upon a raging sea? Are not our passions, with which we live in perpetual strife, more terrible and indomitable than those waves which drive the unfortunate far from his fatherland? Marie! Marie! How can you hate me when I have never ceased to love you? Amid all infatuation, and in the very lap of all the enchanting seductions of vanity and pride, I have ever remembered those happy days of liberty, which I spent at your feet in sweet retirement, as we saw lie before us a succession of blooming prospects. And now why would you not realise with me all that we hoped? Will you now not enjoy the happiness of life because a gloomy interval has deferred our hopes? No, my love, believe that the best friends in the world are not quite pure; the highest joy is also interrupted through our passions, through fate. Shall we complain that it has happened to us as to all others, and shall we chastise ourselves in casting away this opportunity of repairing the past, of consoling a ruined family, of rewarding the heroic deed of a noble brother, and of establishing our own happiness for ever? My friends! from whom I deserve nothing; my friends, who must be so, because they are the friends of virtue, to which I return, unite your entreaties with mine. Marie! (*He falls on his knees.*) Marie! Do you no longer recognise my voice? Do you no more feel the pulse of my heart? Is it so? Marie! Marie!

MARIE. O Clavigo!

CLAVIGO. (*leaps up and kisses her hand with transport*) She forgives me! She loves me! (*He embraces* GUILBERT *and* BUENCO.) She loves me still! O Marie, my heart told me so! I might have thrown myself at your feet silently, uttered with tears my anguish, my penitence; without words you would have understood me, as I without words receive my

forgiveness. No, this intimate union of our souls is not destroyed; no, still they understand each other as in the olden time, in which no sound, no sign, was needful to impart our deepest emotions. Marie! Marie! Marie!

BEAUMARCHAIS *advances.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. Ha!

CLAVIGO. (*rushing toward him*) My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Do you forgive him?

MARIE. No more, no more! my senses abandon me. (*They lead her away.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. Has she forgiven him?

BUENCO. It seems so.

BEAUMARCHAIS. You do not deserve your happiness.

CLAVIGO. I feel it, believe me.

SOPHIE. (*returns*) She forgives him. A stream of tears broke from her eyes. Let him withdraw, said she, sobbing, till I recover! I forgive him. "Ah, my sister!" she exclaimed, and fell upon my neck, "whereby knows he that I love him so?"

CLAVIGO. (*kissing her hand*) I am the happiest man under the sun. My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*embraces him*) With all my heart then. Although I must tell you: even yet I cannot be your friend, even yet I cannot love you. So now you are one of us, and let all be forgotten. The paper you gave me — here it is. (*He takes it from his portfolio, tears it, and gives it to him.*)

CLAVIGO. I am yours, ever yours.

SOPHIE. I beseech you to retire, that she may not hear your voice, that she may rest.

CLAVIGO. (*embracing them in turn*) Farewell! Farewell! A thousand kisses to the angel. [*Exit.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. After all, it may be for the best, although I should have preferred it otherwise (*smiling*).

A girl is a good-natured creature, I must say — and, my friends, I should tell you, too, it was truly the thought, the wish of our ambassador, that Marie should forgive him, and that a happy marriage might end this vexatious business.

GUILBERT. I, too, am taking heart again.

BUENCO. He is your brother-in-law, and so, good-bye! You shall see me in your house no more.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sir!

GUILBERT. Buenco!

BUENCO. I hate him, and shall hate him till the day of judgment. And look out with what kind of a man you have to deal. [*Exit.*

GUILBERT. He is a melancholy bird of ill-omen. But yet in time he will be persuaded, when he sees that all goes well.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Yet it was hasty to return him the paper.

GUILBERT. No more! no more! no visionary cares. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — CLAVIGO'S *abode.* CARLOS, *alone.*

CARLOS. It is praiseworthy to place under guardianship a man, who, by his dissipation or other follies, shows that his reason is deranged. If the magistrate does that, who otherwise does not much concern himself about us, why should not we do it for a friend? Clavigo, you are in a bad position; but there is still hope. And, provided that you retain a little of your former docility, there is time yet to keep you from a folly which, with your lively and sensitive character, will cause the misery of your life and lead you to an untimely grave. He comes.

CLAVIGO. (*thoughtful*) Good day, Carlos.

CARLOS. A very sad, dull . . . Good day! Is that the mood in which you come from your bride?

CLAVIGO. She is an angel. They are excellent people!

CARLOS. You will not so hasten with the wedding that we cannot get an embroidered dress for the occasion?

CLAVIGO. Jest or earnest, at our wedding no embroidered dresses will make a parade.

CARLOS. I believe it, indeed.

CLAVIGO. Pleasure in each other's society, friendly harmony, shall constitute the splendour of this festival.

CARLOS. You will have a quiet little wedding.

CLAVIGO. As those who feel that their happiness rests entirely with themselves.

CARLOS. In those circumstances it is very proper.

CLAVIGO. Circumstances! What do you mean by "those circumstances?"

CARLOS. As the matter now stands and remains.

CLAVIGO. Listen, Carlos, I cannot bear a tone of reserve between friends. I know you are not in favour of this marriage; notwithstanding, if you have aught to say against it, you may say it; come, out with it. How then does the matter stand? how goes it?

CARLOS. More things, unexpected, astonishing, happen to one in life, and it were not well if all went smoothly. Society would have nothing to wonder at, nothing to whisper in the ear, nothing to pull to pieces.

CLAVIGO. It will make some stir.

CARLOS. Clavigo's wedding! that is a matter of course. How many a girl in Madrid waits for thee to make her an offer, and if you now play them this trick?

CLAVIGO. That cannot be helped now.

CARLOS. 'Tis strange, I have known few men who make so great and general an impression on women as you. In all ranks there are good girls who occupy

their time with plans and projects to become yours. One relies on her beauty, another on her riches, another on her rank, another on her wit, and another on her connections. What compliments have been paid to me on your account! For, indeed, neither my flat nose, nor crisp hair, nor my known contempt for women can bring me such good luck.

CLAVIGO. You mock.

CARLOS. As if I have not already had in my hands declarations, offers, written with their own white fond little fingers, as badly spelt as an original love-letter of a girl can only be! How many pretty duennas have come under my thumb on this account!

CLAVIGO. And you did not say a word of all this?

CARLOS. I did not wish to trouble you with mere trifles, and I could not have advised you to take any matter seriously. O Clavigo, my heart has watched over your fate as over my own! I have no other friend but you; all men are not to be tolerated and you even begin to be unbearable.

CLAVIGO. I entreat you, be calm.

CARLOS. Burn the house of a man who has taken ten years to build it, and then send him a confessor to recommend Christian patience! A man ought to look out for no one but himself; people do not deserve —

CLAVIGO. Are your misanthropic visions returning?

CARLOS. If I harp anew on that string who is to blame but you? I said to myself: What would avail him at present the most advantageous marriage? him, who for an ordinary man has doubtless advanced far enough? But with his genius, with his gifts, it is not probable, it is not possible, that he can remain stationary. I concerted my plans. There are so few men at once so enterprising and so supple, so highly gifted and so diligent. He is well qualified in all departments. As Recorder, he can rapidly acquire the most impor-

tant knowledge; he will make himself necessary; and should a change take place, he becomes minister.

CLAVIGO. I avow it. Often, too, were these my dreams.

CARLOS. Dreams! As surely as I should succeed in reaching the top of a tower, if I set off with the firm determination not to yield till I had carried my point, so surely would you have overcome all obstacles; and afterward the rest would have given me no disquietude. You have no fortune from your family, so much the better! You would have become more zealous to acquire, more attentive to preserve. Besides, he who sits at the receipt of custom without enriching himself is a great fool; and I do not see why the country does not owe taxes to the minister as well as to the king. The latter gives his name, and the former the power. When I had arranged all that, I then sought out a fit match for you. I saw many a proud family which would have shut their eyes to your origin, many of the richest, who would have gladly supported the maintenance of your rank, to share the dignity of the second king — and now —

CLAVIGO. You are unjust, you lower my actual condition too much; and do you fancy then that I cannot rise higher, and advance still further?

CARLOS. My dear friend, if you lop off the heart of a young plant, in vain will it afterward and incessantly put forth countless shoots; it will form, perhaps, a large bush, but it is all over with the kingly attempt of its first growth. And think not that at the court this marriage is regarded with indifference. Have you forgotten what sort of men disapproved your attachment, your union with Marie? Have you forgotten who inspired you with the wise thought of abandoning her? Must I count them all on my fingers?

CLAVIGO. This thought has already distressed me; yes, few will approve this step.

CARLOS. Nobody; and will not your powerful friends be indignant that you, without asking their leave, without consulting them, should have hastily sacrificed yourself like a thoughtless child, who throws away his money in the market on worm-eaten nuts?

CLAVIGO. That is impolite, Carlos, and exaggerated.

CARLOS. Not at all. Let one commit an egregious error through passion, I allow it. To marry a chambermaid because she is as beautiful as an angel! Well, the man is blamed, and yet people envy him.

CLAVIGO. People, always the people!

CARLOS. You know I do not inquire very curiously after the success of others; but it is ever true that he who does nothing for others does nothing for himself; and if men do not wonder at or envy you you are not happy either.

CLAVIGO. The world judges by appearances. Oh! he who possesses Marie's heart is to be envied.

CARLOS. Things appear what they are; but, frankly, I have always thought that there were hidden qualities that render your happiness enviable; for what one sees with his eyes and can comprehend with his understanding —

CLAVIGO. You wish to make me desperate.

CARLOS. "How has that happened?" they will ask in the town. "How has that happened?" they will ask at court. "But, good God! how has that happened? She is poor, without position. If Clavigo had not had an intrigue with her one would not have known that she is in the world; she is said to be well-bred, agreeable, witty!" But who takes to himself a wife for that? That passes away in the first years of marriage. "Ah!" says some one, "she must be beautiful, charmingly, ravishingly beautiful." "That explains the matter," says another.

CLAVIGO. (*troubled, lets a deep sigh escape*) Alas!

CARLOS. "Beautiful? Oh," says one lady, "very

good! I have not seen her for six years." "She may well be altered," says another. "One must, however, see her, he will soon bring her forth," says a third. People ask, look, are eager, wait, and are impatient; they recall the ever-proud Clavigo, who never let himself be seen in public without leading out in triumph some stately, splendid, haughty Spaniard lady, whose full bosom, blooming cheeks, impassioned eyes — all, all, seemed to ask the world encircling her: "Am not I worthy of my companion?" and who in her pride lets flaunt so widely in the breeze the train of her silken robe, to render her appearance more imposing and remarkable. And now appears the gentleman — and surprise renders the people dumb — he comes accompanied by his tripping little Frenchwoman, whose hollow eyes, whose whole appearance announces consumption, in spite of the red and white with which she has daubed her death-pale countenance. Yes, brother! I become frantic, I run away, when people stop me now and ask, and question, and say they cannot understand —

CLAVIGO. (*seizing his hand*) My friend, my brother, I am in a frightful position. I tell you, I avow, I was horror-struck when I saw Marie again. How changed she is! — how pale and exhausted! Oh! it is my fault, my treacheries!" —

CARLOS. Follies! visions! She was in consumption when the romance of your love was still unfolding. I told you a thousand times, and . . . But you lovers have your eyes, nay, all your senses closed. Clavigo, it is a shame. All, yes, all to forget thus! A sick wife, who will plague all your posterity, so that all your children and grandchildren will in a few years be politely extinguished, like the sorry lamp of a beggar. A man who could have been the founder of a family, which perhaps in future . . . Ah! I shall yet turn crazy, my reason fails me.

CLAVIGO. Carlos, what shall I say to thee? When I saw her again, in the first transport, my heart went out toward her; and alas! when that was gone, compassion — a deep, heartfelt pity was breathed into me: but love . . . Lo! in the warm fulness of joy, I seemed to feel on my neck the cold hand of death. I strove to be cheerful; to play the part of a happy man again, in presence of those who surrounded me: it was all gone, all so stiff, so painfully anxious! Had they not somewhat lost their self-possession they would have remarked it.

CARLOS. Hell! death and devil! and you are going to marry her! (CLAVIGO *remains absorbed, without giving any answer.*) It is all over with thee; lost for ever. Farewell, brother, and let me forget all; let me, all the rest of my solitary life, furiously curse your fatal blindness. Ah! to sacrifice all, to render oneself despicable in the eyes of the world, and not even then satisfy thereby a passion, a desire! To contract a malady voluntarily, which, while undermining your inmost strength, will make you hideous in the eyes of men!

CLAVIGO. Carlos! Carlos!

CARLOS. Would that you had never been elevated, at least you would never have fallen! With what eyes will they look on all this! "There is the brother," they will say; "he must be a lad of spirit; he has put to the last shift Clavigo, who dared not draw the sword." "Ah!" our flaunting courtiers will say, "'Twas to be seen all along that he was not a gentleman." "Ah, ah!" exclaims another, while drawing his hat over his eyes, "the Frenchman should have come to me!" And he claps himself on the paunch — a fellow, who, perhaps, were not worthy of being your groom!

CLAVIGO. (*expresses the most acute distress, and falls into the arms of* CARLOS *amid a torrent of tears*)

Save me! My friend! my best friend, save me! Save me from a double perjury! from an unutterable disgrace, from myself. I am undone!

CARLOS. Poor hapless fellow! I hoped that these youthful furies, these stormy tears, this absorbing melancholy would have been gone; I hoped to behold you, as a man, agitated no more, no more plunged in that overwhelming sorrow, which in other days you so often uttered on my breast with tears. Be a man, Clavigo, quit yourself like a man!

CLAVIGO. Let me weep! (*Throws himself into a chair.*)

CARLOS. Alas for you, that you have entered on a career which you will not pursue to the end! With your heart, with your sentiments, which would make a tranquil citizen happy, you must unite this unhappy hankering after greatness! And what is greatness, Clavigo? To raise oneself above others in rank and consequence? Believe it not. If your heart is not greater than that of others; if you are not able to place yourself calmly above the circumstances which would embarrass an ordinary man, then with all your ribbons, all your stars, even with the crown itself, you are but an ordinary man. Take heart, compose your mind! (CLAVIGO *rises, looks on* CARLOS, *and holds out his hand, which* CARLOS *eagerly seizes.*) Come, come, my friend! make up your mind. Look, I will put everything aside, and will say to you: Here lie two proposals on equal scales; either you marry Marie and find your happiness in a quiet citizen-like life, in tranquil homely joys; or you bend your steps along the path of honour to a near goal. — I will put all aside, and say: The beam of the balance is in equilibrium; your decision will settle which of the two scales will carry the day! Good! But decide! There is nothing in the world so pitiable as an undecided man, who wavers between two feelings, hoping to reconcile them,

and does not understand that nothing can unite them except the doubt, the disquietude, which rack him. Go, and give Marie your hand, act as an honourable man, who, to keep his word, sacrifices the happiness of his life, who regards it a duty to repair the wrong he has committed; but who, on the other hand, has never extended the sphere of his passions and activity further than to be in a position to repair the wrong he has committed; and thus enjoy the happiness of a tranquil retirement, the approval of a peaceful conscience, and all the blessedness belonging to those who are able to create their own happiness and provide the joy of their families. Decide, and then shall I say — You are every inch a man.

CLAVIGO. Carlos! Oh, for a spark of your strength — of your courage!

CARLOS. It slumbers in thee, and I will blow till it burst forth into flames. Behold on the one side the fortune and the greatness which await you. I shall not set off this future with the variegated hues of poetry; represent it to yourself with such vivacity as it clearly appeared before your mind till the hot-headed Frenchman made you lose your wits. But there, too, Clavigo, be a man thoroughly, and take your way straight, without looking to the right or left. May your soul expand, and this great idea become deeply rooted there, that extraordinary men are extraordinary, precisely because their duties differ from the duties of ordinary men; that he, whose task it is to watch over, to govern, to preserve a great whole, needs not reproach himself with having overlooked trifling circumstances, with having sacrificed small matters to the good of the whole. Thus acts the Creator in nature, and the king in the state; why should not we do the same, in order to resemble them?

CLAVIGO. Carlos, I am a little man.

CARLOS. We are not little when circumstances trouble us, only when they overpower us. Yet another breath, and you are yourself again. Cast away the remnant of a pitiable passion, which in these days as little becomes you as the little gray jacket and modest mien with which you arrived at Madrid. What the poor girl has done for you, you have long ago returned; and that your first friendly reception was from her hands. Oh, another would, for the pleasure of your acquaintance, have done as much and more, without putting forth such pretensions . . . and would you take it into your head to give your schoolmaster the half of your fortune because he taught you the alphabet, thirty years ago? What say you, Clavigo?

CLAVIGO. That is all very well. On the whole you may be right, it may be so; only how are we to get out of the embarrassment in which we stick fast? Advise me there, help me there, and then lecture.

CARLOS. All right! You are, then, resolved.

CLAVIGO. Give me the power and I shall exert it. I am not able to think; think for me.

CARLOS. Thus then. First you will go and meet this person, and then you will demand, sword in hand, the vindication which you inconsiderately and involuntarily gave.

CLAVIGO. I have it already; he tore it and returned it to me.

CARLOS. Excellent! excellent! That step taken already — and you have let me speak so long? — Your course is so much the shorter! Write him quite coolly: "You find it inconvenient to marry his sister; the reason he can learn if he will repair to-night to a certain place, attended by a friend, and armed with any weapons he likes." And then follows the signature. Come, Clavigo, write that; I shall be your second — and the devil is in it if — (CLAVIGO *approaches the table.*) Listen! A word! If I think

aright of it, it is an extravagant proposal. Who are we to risk our lives with a mad adventurer? Besides, the man's conduct, his standing, do not deserve that we regard him as an equal. Listen, then! Now if I were to bring forward a criminal charge against him, that he arrived secretly at Madrid, got himself announced under a pseudonym with an accomplice, at first gained your confidence with friendly words, and thereafter fell upon you all of a sudden, forcibly obtained a declaration, and afterward went off to spread it abroad — that will prove his ruin: he shall learn what it means — to invade the tranquillity of a Spaniard under his own roof.

CLAVIGO. You are right.

CARLOS. But till the lawsuit has begun, in which interval the gentleman might play all sorts of tricks, if now we could meanwhile play a dead-sure game, and seize him tight by the head.

CLAVIGO. I understand, and know you are the man to carry it out.

CARLOS. Ah! well! if I, who have been at it for five and twenty years, and have witnessed tears of anguish trickling down the cheeks of the foremost men, if I cannot unravel such child's play! So then, give me full power; you need do nothing, write nothing. He who orders the imprisonment of the brother pantomimically intimates that he will have nothing to do with the sister.

CLAVIGO. No, Carlos! Let it go as it may, I cannot, I will not suffer that. Beaumarchais is a worthy man, and he shall not languish in an ignominious prison on account of his righteous cause. Another plan, Carlos, another!

CARLOS. Bah! bah! Stuff and nonsense! We will not devour him. He will be well lodged and well cared for, and thereafter he cannot hold out long: for, observe, when he perceives that we are in earnest,

all his theatrical rage will cease; he will come to terms, return smarting to France, and be only too thankful, if we secure a yearly pension for his sister — perhaps the only thing he had in view.

CLAVIGO. So be it then! Only let him be kindly dealt with.

CARLOS. Leave that to me. — One precaution more! We cannot know but that it may be blabbed out — that the thing may get wind, and then he gets over you, and all is lost. Therefore, leave your house, so that not even your servants know where you have gone. Take with you only absolute necessaries. I shall despatch you a fellow, who will conduct you and bring you to a place where the holy Hermandad herself will not find you. I have always in readiness a few of these mouse-holes. Adieu!

CLAVIGO. Good-bye!

CARLOS. Cheer up! cheerily! When it is all over, brother, we will enjoy ourselves. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. — GUILBERT'S *abode.*

SOPHIE GUILBERT, MARIE BEAUMARCHAIS *at work.*

MARIE. With such violence did Buenco depart?

SOPHIE. It was natural. He loves you, and how could he endure the sight of the man whom he must doubly hate?

MARIE. He is the best, most upright citizen I have ever known. (*Showing her work to her sister.*) It seems to me I must do it thus. I shall take in that and turn the end up. That will do nicely.

SOPHIE. Very well. And I am going to put a straw-coloured ribbon on my bonnet; it becomes me best. Do you smile?

MARIE. I am laughing at myself. We girls are a queer set of people, I must say: hardly are our spirits but a little raised when straightway we are busy with finery and ribbons.

SOPHIE. You cannot well apply that to yourself; from the moment Clavigo forsook you, nothing could give you the least pleasure. (MARIE *starts up and looks toward the door.*) What is the matter?

MARIE. (*anxious*) I thought I heard some one come in! My poor heart! O, it will destroy me yet! Feel how it beats with that groundless terror!

SOPHIE. You look pale. Be calm, I beseech you, my love!

MARIE. (*pointing to her chest*) I feel here an oppression — a sudden pain. It will kill me.

SOPHIE. Be careful.

MARIE. I am a foolish, hapless girl. Pain and joy with all their force have undermined my poor life. I tell you 'tis but half a joy that I have him again. Little shall I enjoy the happiness that awaits me in his arms; perhaps not at all.

SOPHIE. My sister, my only love! You are wearing yourself out with these visions.

MARIE. Why shall I deceive myself?

SOPHIE. You are young and happy, and can hope for all.

MARIE. Hope! O, the only sweet balm of life! How often it charms my soul! Happy youthful dreams hover before me and accompany the beloved form of the peerless one, who now is mine again. O Sophie, he is so winsome! Whilst I saw him not, he has — I know not how I shall express it; — all the qualities which in former days lay hid in him through his diffidence have unfolded themselves. He has become a man, and must with this pure feeling of his, with which he advances, that is so entirely devoid of pride and vanity — he must captivate all hearts. —

And he shall be mine? No, my sister, I was not worthy of him — and now I am much less so!

SOPHIE. Take him, however, and be happy. I hear your brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS *enters.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. Where is Guilbert?

SOPHIE. He has been gone some time; he cannot be much longer.

MARIE. What is the matter, brother? (*Springing up and falling on his neck.*) Dear brother, what is the matter?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Nothing, nothing at all, my Marie!

MARIE. If I am thy Marie, do tell me what is on thy mind!

SOPHIE. Let him be. Men often look vexed without having aught particular on their mind!

MARIE. No, no. I have seen thy face only a little while, but already I read all thy thoughts; all the feelings of thy pure and sincere soul are stamped on thy brow. There is somewhat which makes thee anxious. Speak, what is it?

BEAUMARCHAIS. It is nothing, my love. I hope that at bottom it is nothing. Clavigo —

MARIE. How?

BEAUMARCHAIS. I was at Clavigo's house. He is not at home.

SOPHIE. And does that perplex you?

BEAUMARCHAIS. His porter says he has gone he knows not where; no one knows how long. If he should be hiding himself! If he be really gone! Whither? for what reason?

MARIE. We will wait.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Thy tongue lies. Ah! the paleness of thy cheeks, the trembling of thy limbs, all speaks and testifies that thou canst not wait. Dear

sister! (*Clasps her in his arms.*) On this beating, painfully trembling heart I vow, — hear me, O God, who art righteous! hear me, all His saints! — thou shalt be avenged if he — my senses abandon me at the thought — if he fail, if he make himself guilty of a frightful, double perjury; if he mock at our misery . . . No, it is, it is not possible, not possible — Thou shalt be avenged.

SOPHIE. All too soon, too precipitate. Be careful of her health, I beseech you, my brother. (MARIE *sits down.*) What ails thee? You are fainting.

MARIE. No, no. You are so anxious.

SOPHIE. (*gives her water*) Take this glass.

MARIE. No, no! what avails that? Well, for my own sake, give it me.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Where is Guilbert? Where is Buenco? Send for them, I entreat you. (SOPHIE *exit.*) How dost thou feel, Marie?

MARIE. Well, quite well! Think'st thou then, brother —

BEAUMARCHAIS. What, my love?

MARIE. Ah!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Is your breathing painful?

MARIE. The disordered beating of my heart oppresses me.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Have you then no remedy? Do you use no anodyne?

MARIE. I know of only one remedy, and for that I have prayed to God many a time and oft.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Thou shalt have it, and I hope from my hand.

MARIE. That will do well.

SOPHIE *enters.*

SOPHIE. A courier has just brought this letter; he comes from Aranjuez.

BEAUMARCHAIS. That is the seal and the hand of our ambassador.

SOPHIE. I bade him dismount and take some refreshment; he would not, because he had yet more dispatches.

MARIE. Will you, my love, send the servant for the physician?

SOPHIE. Are you ill? Holy God! what ails thee?

MARIE. You will make me so anxious that at last I shall scarcely dare ask for a glass of water. . . . Sophie! Brother! — What is in the letter? See, how he trembles! how all courage leaves him!

SOPHIE. Brother, my brother! (BEAUMARCHAIS *throws himself speechless into a chair and lets the letter fall.*) My brother! (*Lifts up the letter and reads it.*)

MARIE. Let me see it! I must — (*tries to rise*). Alas! I feel it. It is the last. Oh, sister, spare not, for mercy's sake, the last quick death-stroke! — He betrays us!

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*springing up*) He betrays us! (*Beating on his brow and breast.*) Here! here! All is as dumb, as dead before my soul, as if a thunderclap had disordered my senses. Marie! Marie! thou art betrayed! — and I stand here! Whither? — What? — I see nothing, nothing! no way, no safety! (*Throws himself into a seat.*)

GUILBERT *enters.*

SOPHIE. Guilbert! Counsel! Help! We are lost!

GUILBERT. My wife!

SOPHIE. Read! read! The ambassador makes known to our brother: that Clavigo has made a criminal complaint against him, under the pretext that he introduced himself into his house under a false name; and that, taking him by surprise in bed and presenting

a pistol, he compelled him to sign a disgraceful vindication; and if he do not quickly withdraw from the kingdom they will get him thrown into prison, from which the ambassador himself, perhaps, will not be able to deliver him.

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*springing up*) Indeed, they shall do so! they shall do so! shall get me imprisoned; but from his corpse, from the place where I shall have glutted my vengeance with his blood. Ah! the stern, frightful thirst after his blood fills my whole soul. Thanks to Thee, God in heaven, that Thou vouchsafest to man, amid burning, insupportable wrongs, a solace, a refreshment! What a thirst for vengeance I feel in my breast! how the glorious feeling, the lust for his blood, raises me out of my utter dejection, out of my sluggish indecision; raises me above myself! Vengeance! How I rejoice in it! how all within me strives after him, to seize him, to destroy him.

SOPHIE. Thou art terrible, brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. So much the better. — Ah! No sword, no weapon! with these hands will I strangle him, that the triumph may be mine! all my own the feeling: I have destroyed him!

MARIE. My heart! my heart!

BEAUMARCHAIS. I have not been able to save thee, so thou shalt be avenged. I pant after his footsteps, my teeth lust after his flesh, my gums after his blood. Have I become a frantic wild beast? There burns in every vein, there glows in every nerve, the desire after him, after him! — I could hate for ever, who should make away with him by poison, who should rid me of him by assassination. Oh, help me, Guilbert, to seek him out. Where is Buenco? Help me to find him!

GUILBERT. Save yourself! save yourself! you have lost your reason.

MARIE. Flee, my brother!

SOPHIE. Take him away; he will cause his sister's death.

BUENCO *appears.*

BUENCO. Up, sir! away! I foresaw it. I gave heed to all. And now they are in hot pursuit; you are lost if you do not leave the town this moment.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Never! where is Clavigo? —

BUENCO. I do not know.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Thou knowest. I entreat you on my knees, tell me.

SOPHIE. For God's sake, Buenco!

MARIE. Ah! air! air! (*Falls back.*) Clavigo!

BUENCO. Help! she is dying!

SOPHIE Forsake us not, God in heaven; — hence, my brother, away!

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*falls down before* MARIE, *who despite every aid does not recover*) To forsake thee! to forsake thee!

SOPHIE. Stay, then, and ruin us all, as you have killed Marie. You are gone, then, O my sister, through the heedlessness of your own brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Stop, sister!

SOPHIE. (*mocking*) Saviour! — Avenger! — help yourself!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Do I deserve this?

SOPHIE. Give her to me again! And then go to the prison, to the stake; go, pour forth thy blood and give me her again.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sophie!

SOPHIE. Ha! she is gone; she is dead — save yourself for us! (*falling on his neck*) my brother, for us! for our father! Haste, haste! That was her fate! she has met it! And there is a God in heaven; to Him leave vengeance.

BUENCO. Hence! away! Come with me; I will hide you till we find means to get you out of the kingdom.

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*falls on* MARIE *and kisses her*) Sister dear! (*They tear him away, he clasps* SOPHIE, *she disengages herself. They remove* MARIE, *and* BUENCO *and* BEAUMARCHAIS *retire.*)

GUILBERT, *a* PHYSICIAN.

SOPHIE. (*returning from the room to which they had taken* MARIE) Too late! She is gone! she is dead!

GUILBERT. Come in, sir! See for yourself! It is not possible! [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *The Street before the house of* GUILBERT. *Night.* (*The house is open, and before the door stands three men clad in black mantles, holding torches.* CLAVIGO *enters, wrapped in a cloak, his sword under his arm; a* SERVANT *goes before him with a torch.*)

CLAVIGO. I told you to avoid this street.

SERVANT. We must have gone a great way round, sir, and you are in such haste. It is not far hence where Don Carlos is lodged.

CLAVIGO. Torches there!

SERVANT. A funeral. Come on, sir.

CLAVIGO. Marie's abode! A funeral! A death-agony shudders through all my limbs! Go, ask whom they are going to bury.

SERVANT. (*to the men*) Whom are you going to bury?

THE MEN. Marie de Beaumarchais. (CLAVIGO *sits down on a stone and covers himself with a cloak.*)

SERVANT. (*comes back*) They are going to bury Marie de Beaumarchais.

CLAVIGO. (*springing up*) Must thou repeat it? Repeat that word of thunder which strikes all the marrow out of my bones?

SERVANT. Peace, sir! Come on, sir. Consider the danger by which you are surrounded.

CLAVIGO. To hell with thee, reptile! I remain.

SERVANT. O Carlos! O that I could find thee! — Carlos! — he has lost his reason. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. — CLAVIGO. *The Mutes in the distance.*

CLAVIGO. Dead! Marie dead! Torches! her dismal attendants! It is a trick of enchantment, a night vision, that terrifies me; that holds up to me a mirror, in which I may see foreboded the end of all my treacheries. But there is still time. Still! — I tremble! — my heart melts with horror! No! no! thou shalt not die — I come, I come! Vanish, ye spirits of the night, who with your horrible terrors set yourselves in my way. (*He goes up to them.*) Vanish — they remain! Ha! they look round after me! Woe! woe is me! They are men like myself. It is true! true! Canst thou comprehend it? She is dead. It seizes me amid all the horrors of midnight — the feeling — she is dead. There she lies, the flower at your feet! and thou — O have mercy on me, God in heaven — I have not killed her! Hide yourselves, ye stars; look not down! Ye, who have so often beheld the villain, with feelings of the most heartfelt happiness, leave this threshold; through this very street float along in golden dreams, with music and song, and enrapture his maiden listening at the secret casement and lingering in transport. And now I fill the house with wailing and sorrow — and this scene of my bliss with the funeral song — Marie! Marie! take me with thee! take me with thee! (*Mournful music breathes forth a few sounds from within.*) They are setting out on the

way to the grave. Stop! stop! Shut not the coffin. Let me see her once more. (*He runs up to the house.*) Ha! into whose presence am I rushing? Whom to face in his terrible sorrow? Her friends! her brother! whose breast is panting with raving grief! (*The music recommences.*) She calls me! she calls me! I come! What anguish is this which overwhelms me? What shuddering withholds me?

[*The music begins for the third time and continues. The torches move before the door; three others come out to them, who range themselves in order to enclose the funeral procession, which now comes out of the house. Six bearers carry the bier, upon which lies the coffin, covered.*

SCENE III. — GUILBERT *and* BUENCO (*in deep mourning*).

CLAVIGO. (*coming forward*) Stay!

GUILBERT. What voice is that?

CLAVIGO. Stay! (*The bearers stop.*)

BUENCO. Who dares to interrupt the solemn funeral?

CLAVIGO. Set it down.

GUILBERT. Ha!

BUENCO. Wretch! are thy deeds of shame not yet ended? Is thy victim not safe from thee in the coffin?

CLAVIGO. No more! Make me not frantic. The wretched are dangerous; I must see her. (*He tears off the pall and the lid of the coffin.* MARIE *is seen lying within it, clad in white, her hands clasped before her;* CLAVIGO *steps back and covers his face.*)

BUENCO. Wilt thou awake her to murder her again?

CLAVIGO. Poor mocker! Marie! (*He falls down before the coffin.*)

SCENE IV. — *Enter* BEAUMARCHAIS. *The preceding.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. Buenco has left me. They say she is not dead. I must see, spite of hell, I must see her. Ha! torches! a funeral! (*He runs hastily up to it, gazes on the coffin, and falls down speechless. They raise him up; he is as if deprived of sense;* GUILBERT *holds him.*)

CLAVIGO. (*who is standing on the other side of the coffin*) Marie! Marie!

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*springing up*) That is his voice. Who calls Marie? At the sound of that voice what burning rage starts into my veins!

CLAVIGO. It is I. (BEAUMARCHAIS *staring wildly around and grasping his sword.* GUILBERT *holds him.*) I fear not thy blazing eyes, nor the point of thy sword. Oh! look here, here, on these closed eyes — these clasped hands!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Dost *thou* show *me* that sight? (*He tears himself loose, runs upon* CLAVIGO, *who instantly draws; they fight;* BEAUMARCHAIS *pierces him through the breast.*)

CLAVIGO. (*falling*) I thank thee, brother; thou marriest us. (*He falls upon the coffin.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. (*tearing him away*) Hence from this saint, thou fiend!

CLAVIGO. Alas! (*The bearers raise up his body and support him.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. His blood! Look up, Marie, look upon thy bridal ornaments, and then close thine eyes for ever. See how I have consecrated thy place of rest with the blood of thy murderer! Charming! Glorious!

SCENE V. — *Enter* SOPHIE. *The Preceding.*

SOPHIE. My brother? O my God, what is the matter?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Draw nearer, my love, and see! I hoped to have strewn her bridal bed with roses; see the roses with which I adorn her on her way to heaven!

SOPHIE. We are lost!

CLAVIGO. Save yourself, rash one! save yourself, ere the dawn of day. May God, who sent you for an avenger, conduct you! Sophie, forgive me. Brothers, friends, forgive me.

BEAUMARCHAIS. How the sight of his gushing blood extinguishes all the glowing vengeance within me! how with his departing life vanishes all my rage! (*Going up to him.*) Die, I forgive thee.

CLAVIGO. Your hand! and yours, Sophie! and yours! (BUENCO *hesitates.*)

SOPHIE. Give it him, Buenco.

CLAVIGO. I thank you; you are as good as ever; I thank you. And thou, O spirit of my beloved, if thou still hoverest around this place, look down, see these heavenly favours, bestow thy blessing, and do thou too forgive me. I come! I come! Save yourself, my brother. Tell me, did she forgive me? How did she die?

SOPHIE. Her last word was thy unhappy name. She departed without taking leave of us.

CLAVIGO. I will follow her and bear your farewells to her.

SCENE VI. — CARLOS, *a* SERVANT. *The Preceding.*

CARLOS. Clavigo! murderers!

CLAVIGO. Hear me, Carlos! Thou seest here the victim of thy prudence; and now, I conjure thee, for the sake of that blood, in which my life irrevocably flows away, save my brother.

CARLOS. O my friend! (*To the* SERVANT.) You standing there? Fly for a surgeon. [*Exit* SERVANT.

CLAVIGO. It is in vain; save, save my unhappy brother! thy hand thereon. They have forgiven me, and so forgive I thee. Accompany him to the frontiers, and — oh!

CARLOS. (*stamping with his feet*) Clavigo! Clavigo!

CLAVIGO. (*drawing nearer to the coffin, upon which they lay him down*) Marie! Thy hand! (*He unfolds her hands and grasps the right hand.*)

SOPHIE. (*to* BEAUMARCHAIS) Hence, unhappy one, away!

CLAVIGO. I have her hand, her cold, dead hand. Thou art mine. Yet this last bridal kiss! Alas!

SOPHIE. He is dying! Save thyself, brother! (BEAUMARCHAIS *falls on* SOPHIE'S *neck. She returns the embrace and makes a sign for him to withdraw.*)

Egmont

A Tragedy in Five Acts

Translated by Anna Swanwick

This tragedy was commenced in the year 1775, when Goethe was twenty-six years of age — but it was not finished until eleven years later. A rough draft of the whole was made in 1782, but it was only completed and finally re-written during Goethe's residence in Rome, in 1786.

Introduction to Egmont

In Schiller's critique upon the tragedy of Egmont, Goethe is censured for departing from the truth of history in the delineation of his hero's character, and also for misrepresenting the circumstances of his domestic life. The Egmont of history left behind him a numerous family, anxiety for whose welfare detained him in Brussels when most of his friends sought safety in flight. His withdrawal would have entailed the confiscation of his property, and he shrank from exposing to privation those whose happiness was dearer to him than life; — a consideration which he repeatedly urged in his conferences with the Prince of Orange, when the latter insisted upon the necessity of escape. We see here, not the victim of a blind and foolhardy confidence, as portrayed in Goethe's drama, but the husband and father, regardless of his personal safety in anxiety for the interests of his family.

I shall not inquire which conception is best suited for the purposes of art, but merely subjoin a few extracts from the same critique, in which Schiller does ample justice to Goethe's admirable delineation of the age and country in which the drama is cast, and which are peculiarly valuable from the pen of so competent an authority as the historian of the Fall of the Netherlands.

"Egmont's tragical death resulted from the relation in which he stood to the nation and the government; hence the action of the drama is intimately connected

with the political life of the period — an exhibition of which forms its indispensable groundwork. But if we consider what an infinite number of minute circumstances must concur in order to exhibit the spirit of an age, and the political condition of a people, and the art required to combine so many isolated features into an intelligible and organic whole; and if we contemplate, moreover, the peculiar character of the Netherlands, consisting not of one nation, but of an aggregate of many smaller states, separated from each other by the sharpest contrasts, we shall not cease to wonder at the creative genius, which, triumphing over all these difficulties, conjures up before us, as with an enchanter's wand, the Netherlands of the sixteenth century.

"Not only do we behold these men living and working before us, we dwell among them as their familiar associates; we see, on the other hand, the joyous sociability, the hospitality, the loquacity, the somewhat boastful temper of the people, their republican spirit, ready to boil up at the slightest innovation, and often subsiding again as rapidly on the most trivial grounds; and, on the other hand, we are made acquainted with the burdens under which they groaned, from the new mitres of the bishops, to the French psalms which they were forbidden to sing; — nothing is omitted, no feature introduced which does not bear the stamp of nature and of truth. Such delineation is not the result of premeditated effort, nor can it be commanded by art; it can only be achieved by the poet whose mind is thoroughly imbued with his subject; from him such traits escape unconsciously, and without design, as they do from the individuals whose characters they serve to portray.

"The few scenes in which the citizens of Brussels are introduced appear to us to be the result of profound study, and it would be difficult to find, in so

few words, a more admirable historical monument of the Netherlands of that period.

"Equally graphic is that portion of the picture which portrays the spirit of the government, though it must be confessed that the artist has here somewhat softened down the harsher features of the original. This is especially true in reference to the character of the Duchess of Parma. Before his Duke of Alva we tremble, without ever turning from him with aversion; he is a firm, rigid, inaccessible character; 'a brazen tower without gates, the garrison of which must be furnished with wings.' The prudent forecast with which he makes his arrangements for Egmont's arrest excites our admiration, while it removes him from our sympathy. The remaining characters of the drama are delineated with a few masterly strokes. The subtle, taciturn Orange, with his timid, yet comprehensive and all-combining mind, is depicted in a single scene. Both Alva and Egmont are mirrored in the men by whom they are surrounded. This mode of delineation is admirable. The poet, in order to concentrate the interest upon Egmont, has isolated his hero, and omitted all mention of Count Horn, who shared the same melancholy fate."

The Appendix to Schiller's "History of the Fall of the Netherlands" contains an interesting account of the trial and execution of the Counts Egmont and Horn, which is, however, too long for insertion here.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARGARET OF PARMA, Daughter of Charles V., and Regent of the Netherlands.
COUNT EGMONT, Prince of Gaure.
WILLIAM OF ORANGE.
THE DUKE OF ALVA.
FERDINAND, his Natural Son.
MACHIAVEL, in the service of the Regent.
RICHARD, Egmont's Private Secretary.
SILVA, } in the service of Alva.
GOMEZ, }
CLARA, the beloved of Egmont.
HER MOTHER.
BRACKENBURG, a Citizen's Son.
SOEST, a Shopkeeper, }
JETTER, a Tailor, } Citizens of Brussels.
A CARPENTER, }
A SOAPBOILER, }
BUYCK, a Hollander, a Soldier under Egmont.
RUYSUM, a Frieslander, an invalid Soldier and deaf.
VANSEN, a Clerk.

People, Attendants, Guards, etc.

The Scene is laid in Brussels.

Egmont

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *Soldiers and Citizens (with cross-bows).*

JETTER (*steps forward, and bends his cross-bow*). SOEST. BUYCK, RUYSUM.

SOEST. Come, shoot away, and have done with it! You won't beat me! Three black rings, you never made such a shot in all your life. And so I'm master for this year.

JETTER. Master and king to boot; who envies you? You'll have to pay double reckoning; 'tis only fair you should pay for your dexterity.

BUYCK. Jetter, I'll buy your shot, share the prize, and treat the company. I have already been here so long, and am a debtor for so many civilities. If I miss, then it shall be as if you had shot.

SOEST. I ought to have a voice, for in fact I am the loser. No matter! Come, Buyck, shoot away.

BUYCK. (*shoots*) Now, corporal, look out! — One! Two! Three! Four!

SOEST. Four rings! So be it!

ALL. Hurrah! Long live the king! Hurrah! Hurrah!

BUYCK. Thanks, sirs, master even were too much! Thanks for the honour.

JETTER. You have no one to thank but yourself.

RUYSUM. Let me tell you! —

SOEST. How now, gray-beard?

RUYSUM. Let me tell you! He shoots like his master, he shoots like Egmont.

BUYCK. Compared with him I am only a bungler. He aims with the rifle as no one else does. Not only when he's lucky or in the vein; no! he levels, and the bull's-eye is pierced. I have learned from him. He were, indeed, a blockhead, who could serve under him and learn nothing! — But, sirs, let us not forget: A king maintains his followers; and so, wine here, at the king's charge!

JETTER. We have agreed among ourselves that each —

BUYCK. I am a foreigner and a king, and care not a jot for your laws and customs.

JETTER. Why, you are worse than the Spaniard, who has not yet ventured to meddle with them.

RUYSUM. What does he say?

SOEST. (*loud to* RUYSUM) He wants to treat us; he will not hear of our clubbing together, the king paying only a double share.

RUYSUM. Let him! under protest, however! 'Tis his master's fashion, too, to be munificent, and to let the money flow in a good cause. (*Wine is brought.*)

ALL. Here's to his Majesty! Hurrah!

JETTER. (*to* BUYCK) That means your Majesty, of course.

BUYCK. My hearty thanks, if it be so.

SOEST. Assuredly! A Netherlander does not find it easy to drink the health of his Spanish Majesty from his heart.

RUYSUM. Who?

SOEST. (*aloud*) Philip the Second, King of Spain.

RUYSUM. Our most gracious king and master! Long life to him.

SOEST. Did you not like his father, Charles the Fifth, better?

RUYSUM. God bless him! He was a king, indeed! His hand reached over the whole earth, and he was all in all. Yet, when he met you, he'd greet you just as one neighbour greets another, — and if you were frightened, he knew so well how to put you at your ease — ay, you understand me — he walked out, rode out, just as it came into his head, with very few followers. We all wept when he resigned the government here to his son. You understand me — he is another sort of man, he's more majestic.

JETTER. When he was here he never appeared in public, except in pomp and royal state. He speaks little, they say.

SOEST. He is no king for us Netherlanders. Our princes must be joyous and free like ourselves, must live and let live. We will neither be despised nor oppressed, good-natured fools though we be.

JETTER. The king, methinks, were a gracious sovereign enough, if he had only better counsellors.

SOEST. No, no! He has no affection for us Netherlanders; he has no heart for the people; he loves us not; how then can we love him? Why is everybody so fond of Count Egmont? Why are we all so devoted to him? Why, because one can read in his face that he loves us; because joyousness, open-heartedness, and good nature speak in his eyes; because he possesses nothing that he does not share with him who needs it, ay, and with him who needs it not. Long live Count Egmont! Buyck, it is for you to give the first toast; give us your master's health.

BUYCK. With all my heart; here's to Count Egmont! Hurrah!

RUYSUM. Conqueror of St. Quintin.

BUYCK. The hero of Gravelines.

ALL. Hurrah!

RUYSUM. St. Quintin was my last battle. I was hardly able to crawl along, and could with difficulty carry my heavy rifle. I managed, notwithstanding, to singe the skin of the French once more, and, as a parting gift, received a grazing shot in my right leg.

BUYCK. Gravelines! Ha, my friends, we had sharp work of it there! The victory was all our own. Did not those French dogs carry fire and desolation into the very heart of Flanders? We gave it them, however! The old, hard-fisted veterans held out bravely for awhile, but we pushed on, fired away, and laid about us till they made wry faces, and their lines gave way. Then Egmont's horse was shot under him; and for a long time we fought pell-mell, man to man, horse to horse, troop to troop, on the broad, flat sea-sand. Suddenly, as if from heaven, down came the cannon-shot from the mouth of the river, bang, bang, right into the midst of the French. These were English who, under Admiral Malin, happened to be sailing past from Dunkirk. They did not help us much, 'tis true; they could only approach with their smallest vessels, and that not near enough; — besides, their shot fell sometimes among our troops. It did some good, however! It broke the French lines, and raised our courage. Away it went. Helter-skelter! topsy-turvy! all struck dead, or forced into the water; the fellows were drowned the moment they tasted the water, while we Hollanders dashed in after them. Being amphibious, we were as much in our element as frogs, and hacked away at the enemy, and shot them down as if they had been ducks. The few who struggled through were struck dead in their flight by the peasant women, armed with hoes and pitchforks. His Gallic Majesty was compelled at once to hold out his paw and make peace. And that peace you owe to us, to the great Egmont.

ALL. Hurrah for the great Egmont! Hurrah! Hurrah!

JETTER. Had they but appointed him Regent instead of Margaret of Parma!

SOEST. Not so!, Truth is truth! I'll not hear Margaret abused. Now it is my turn. Long live our gracious lady!

ALL. Long life to her!

SOEST. Truly, there are excellent women in that family. Long live the Regent!

JETTER. Prudent she is, and moderate in all she does; if she would only not hold so fast and stiffly with the priests. It is partly her fault, too, that we have the fourteen new mitres in the land. Of what use are they, I should like to know? Why, that foreigners may be shoved into the good benefices, where formerly abbots were chosen out of the chapters! And we're to believe it's for the sake of religion. We know better. Three bishops were enough for us; things went on decently and reputably. Now each must busy himself as if he were needed; and this gives rise every moment to dissensions and ill-will. And the more you agitate the matter, so much the worse it grows. (*They drink.*)

SOEST. But it was the will of the king; she cannot alter it, one way or another.

JETTER. Then we may not even sing the new psalms, but ribald songs, as many as we please. And why? There is heresy in them, they say, and heaven knows what. I have sung some of them, however; they are new, to be sure, but I see no harm in them.

BUYCK. Ask their leave, forsooth! In our province we sing just what we please. That's because Count Egmont is our stadtholder, who does not trouble himself about such matters. In Ghent, Ypres, and throughout the whole of Flanders, anybody sings them that chooses. (*Aloud to* RUYSUM.) There is nothing more harmless than a church hymn — is there, father?

RUYSUM. What, indeed! It is a godly work, and truly edifying.

JETTER. They say, however, that they are not of the right sort, not of their sort, and, since it is dangerous, we had better leave them alone. The officers of the Inquisition are always lurking and spying about; many an honest fellow has already fallen into their clutches. They had not gone so far as to meddle with conscience! If they will not allow me to do what I like, they might at least let me think and sing as I please.

SOEST. The Inquisition won't do here. We are not made like the Spaniards, to let our consciences be tyrannised over. The nobles must look to it, and clip its wings betimes.

JETTER. It is a great bore. Whenever it comes into their worships' heads to break into my house, and I am sitting there at my work, humming a French psalm, thinking nothing about it, neither good nor bad — singing it just because it is in my throat; — forthwith I am a heretic, and am clapped into prison. Or, if I am passing through the country, and stand near a crowd listening to a new preacher, one of those who have come from Germany, instantly I am called a rebel, and am in danger of losing my head! Have you ever heard one of these preachers?

SOEST. A worthy set of people! Not long ago I heard one of them preach in a field, before thousands and thousands of people. He gave us a sort of dish very different from that of our humdrum preachers, who, from the pulpit, choke their hearers with scraps of Latin. He spoke from his heart; told us how we had till now been led by the nose, how we had been kept in darkness, and how we might procure more light; — ay, and he proved it all out of the Bible.

JETTER. There may be something in it. I always said as much, and have often pondered over the matter. It has long been running in my head.

BUYCK. All the people run after them.

SOEST. No wonder, since they hear both what is good and what is new.

JETTER. And what is it all about? Surely they might let every one preach after his own fashion.

BUYCK. Come, sirs! While you are talking, you forget the wine and the Prince of Orange.

JETTER. We must not forget him. He's a very wall of defence. In thinking of him, one fancies that if one could only hide behind him, the devil himself could not get at one. Here's to William of Orange! Hurrah!

ALL. Hurrah! Hurrah!

SOEST. Now, gray-beard, let's have your toast.

RUYSUM. Here's to old soldiers! To all soldiers! War for ever!

BUYCK. Bravo, old fellow. Here's to all soldiers. War for ever!

JETTER. War! War! Do ye know what ye are shouting about? That it should slip glibly from your tongue is natural enough; but what wretched work it is for us, I have not words to tell you. To be stunned the whole year round by the beating of the drum; to hear of nothing except how one troop marched here, and another there; how they came over this height and halted near that mill; how many were left dead on this field, and how many on that; how they press forward, and how one wins, and another loses, without being able to comprehend what they are fighting about; how a town is taken, how the citizens are put to the sword, and how it fares with the poor women and innocent children. This is a grief and a trouble, and then one thinks every moment, "Here they come! It will be our turn next."

SOEST. Therefore every citizen must be practised in the use of arms.

JETTER. Fine talking, indeed, for him who has

a wife and children. And yet I would rather hear of soldiers than see them.

BUYCK. I might take offence at that.

JETTER. It was not intended for you, countryman. When we got rid of the Spanish garrison we breathed freely again.

SOEST. Faith! they pressed on you heavily enough.

JETTER. Mind your own business.

SOEST. They came to sharp quarters with you.

JETTER. Hold your tongue.

SOEST. They drove him out of kitchen, cellar, chamber — and bed. (*They laugh.*)

JETTER. You are a blockhead.

BUYCK. Peace, sirs! Must the soldier cry peace? Since you will not hear anything about us, let us have a toast of your own — a citizen's toast.

JETTER. We're all ready for that! Safety and peace!

SOEST. Order and freedom!

BUYCK. Bravo! That will content us all.

[*They ring their glasses together, and joyously repeat the words, but in such a manner that each utters a different sound, and it becomes a kind of chant. The old man listens, and at length joins in.*

ALL. Safety and peace! Order and freedom!

SCENE II. — *Palace of the* REGENT.

MARGARET OF PARMA (*in a hunting dress*). COURTIERS, PAGES, SERVANTS.

REGENT. Put off the hunt, I shall not ride to-day. Bid Machiavel attend me. [*Exeunt all but the* REGENT.

The thought of these terrible events leaves me no repose! Nothing can amuse, nothing divert my mind.

These images, these cares, are always before me. The king will now say that these are the natural fruits of my kindness, of my clemency; yet my conscience assures me that I have adopted the wisest, the most prudent course. Ought I sooner to have kindled and spread abroad these flames with the breath of wrath? my hope was to keep them in, to let them smoulder in their own ashes. Yes, my inward conviction, and my knowledge of the circumstances, justify my conduct in my own eyes; but in what light will it appear to my brother? For can it be denied that the insolence of these foreign teachers waxes daily more audacious? They have desecrated our sanctuaries, unsettled the dull minds of the people and conjured up amongst them a spirit of delusion. Impure spirits have mingled among the insurgents, horrible deeds have been perpetrated, which to think of makes one shudder, and of these a circumstantial account must be transmitted to court instantly. Prompt and minute must be my communication, lest rumour outrun my messenger, and the king suspect that some particulars have been purposely withheld. I can see no means, severe or mild, by which to stem the evil. Oh, what are we great ones on the waves of humanity? We think to control them, and are ourselves driven to and fro, hither and thither.

Enter MACHIAVEL.

REGENT. Are the despatches to the king prepared?

MACHIAVEL. In an hour they will be ready for your signature.

REGENT. Have you made the report sufficiently circumstantial?

MACHIAVEL. Full and circumstantial, as the king loves to have it. I relate how the rage of the iconoclasts first broke out at St. Omer. How a furious

multitude, with staves, hatchets, hammers, ladders and cords, accompanied by a few armed men, first assailed the chapels, churches, and convents, drove out the worshippers, forced the barred gates, threw everything into confusion, tore down the altars, destroyed the statues of the saints, defaced the pictures, and dashed to atoms and trampled under foot whatever that was consecrated and holy came in their way. How the crowd increased as it advanced, and how the inhabitants of Ypres opened their gates at its approach. How, with incredible rapidity, they demolished the cathedral, and burned the library of the bishop. How a vast multitude, possessed by the like frenzy, dispersed themselves through Menin, Comines, Verviers, Lille, nowhere encountered opposition; and how, through almost the whole of Flanders, in a single moment, the monstrous conspiracy declared itself and was accomplished.

REGENT. Alas! Your recital rends my heart anew; and the fear that the evil will wax greater and greater adds to my grief. Tell me your thoughts, Machiavel!

MACHIAVEL. Pardon me, your Highness, my thoughts will appear to you but as idle fancies; and though you always seem well satisfied with my services, you have seldom felt inclined to follow my advice. How often have you said in jest: "You see too far, Machiavel! You should be an historian; he who acts must provide for the exigency of the hour." And yet, have I not predicted this terrible history? Have I not foreseen it all?

REGENT. I, too, foresee many things without being able to avert them.

MACHIAVEL. In one word, then: — you will not be able to suppress the new faith. Let it be recognised, separate its votaries from the true believers, give them churches of their own, include them within the pale of social order, subject them to the restraints of law, —

do this, and you will at once tranquillise the insurgents. All other measures will prove abortive, and you will depopulate the country.

REGENT. Have you forgotten with what aversion the mere suggestion of toleration was rejected by my brother? Know you not, how in every letter he urgently recommends to me the maintenance of the true faith? That he will not hear of tranquillity and order being restored at the expense of religion? Even in the provinces, does he not maintain spies, unknown to us, in order to ascertain who inclines to the new doctrines? Has he not, to our astonishment, named to us this or that individual residing in our very neighbourhood, who, without its being known, was obnoxious to the charge of heresy? Does he not enjoin harshness and severity? and am I to be lenient? Am I to recommend for his adoption measures of indulgence and toleration? Should I not thus lose all credit with him, and at once forfeit his confidence?

MACHIAVEL. I know it. The king commands, and puts you in full possession of his intentions. You are to restore tranquillity and peace by measures which cannot fail still more to embitter men's minds and which must inevitably kindle the flames of war from one extremity of the country to the other. Consider well what you are doing. The principal merchants are infected — nobles, citizens, soldiers. What avails persisting in our opinion when everything is changing around us? Oh, that some good genius would suggest to Philip that it better becomes a monarch to govern burghers of two different creeds, than to excite them to mutual destruction!

REGENT. Never let me hear such words again. Full well I know that the policy of statesmen rarely maintains truth and fidelity; that it excludes from the heart candour, charity, toleration. In secular affairs, this is, alas! only too true; but shall we trifle with

God as we do with each other? Shall we be indifferent to our established faith, for the sake of which so many have sacrificed their lives? Shall we abandon it to these far-fetched, uncertain, and self-contradicting heresies?

MACHIAVEL. Think not the worse of me for what I have uttered.

REGENT. I know you and your fidelity. I know, too, that a man may be both honest and sagacious, and yet miss the best and nearest way to the salvation of his soul. There are others, Machiavel, men whom I esteem, yet whom I needs must blame.

MACHIAVEL. To whom do you refer?

REGENT. I must confess that Egmont caused me to-day deep and heartfelt annoyance.

MACHIAVEL. How so?

REGENT. By his accustomed demeanour, his usual indifference and levity. I received the fatal tidings as I was leaving church, attended by him and several others. I did not restrain my anguish, I broke forth into lamentations, loud and deep, and turning to him, exclaimed, "See what is going on in your province! Do you suffer it, count, you in whom the king confided so implicitly?"

MACHIAVEL. And what was his reply?

REGENT. As if it were a mere trifle, an affair of no moment, he answered: "Were the Netherlanders but satisfied as to their constitution, the rest would soon follow."

MACHIAVEL. There was, perhaps, more truth than discretion or piety in his words. How can we hope to acquire and to maintain the confidence of the Netherlander when he sees that we are more interested in appropriating his possessions than in promoting his welfare, temporal or spiritual? Does the number of souls saved by the new bishops exceed that of the fat benefices they have swallowed? And are they not

for the most part foreigners? As yet, the office of stadtholder has been held by Netherlanders; but do not the Spaniards betray their great and irresistible desire to possess themselves of these places? Will not people prefer being governed by their own countrymen, and according to their ancient customs, rather than by foreigners, who, from their first entrance into the land, endeavour to enrich themselves at the general expense, who measure everything by a foreign standard, and exercise their authority without cordiality or sympathy?

REGENT. You take part with our opponents?

MACHIAVEL. Assuredly not in my heart. Would that with my understanding I could be wholly on our side.

REGENT. If such is your opinion, it were better I should resign the regency to them; for both Egmont and Orange entertained great hopes of occupying this position. Then they were adversaries; now they are leagued against me, and have become friends — inseparable friends.

MACHIAVEL. A dangerous pair.

REGENT. To speak candidly, I fear Orange. — I fear for Egmont. — Orange meditates some dangerous scheme, his thoughts are far-reaching, he is reserved, appears to accede to everything, never contradicts, and while maintaining the show of reverence, with clear foresight accomplishes his own designs.

MACHIAVEL. Egmont, on the contrary, advances with a bold step, as if the world were all his own.

REGENT. He bears his head as proudly as if the hand of Majesty were not suspended over him.

MACHIAVEL. The eyes of all the people are fixed upon him, and he is the idol of their hearts.

REGENT. He has never assumed the least disguise, and carries himself as if no one had a right to call him to account. He still bears the name of Egmont.

Count Egmont is the title by which he loves to hear himself addressed, as though he would fain be reminded that his ancestors were masters of Guelderland. Why does he not assume his proper title, — Prince of Gaure? What object has he in view? Would he again revive extinguished claims?

MACHIAVEL. I hold him to be a faithful servant of the king.

REGENT. Were he so inclined, what important service he could render to the government! Whereas now, without benefiting himself he has caused us unspeakable vexation. His banquets and entertainments have done more to unite the nobles and to knit them together than the most dangerous secret associations. With his toasts his guests have drunk in a permanent intoxication, a giddy frenzy, that never subsides. How often have his facetious jests stirred up the minds of the populace? and what an excitement was produced among the mob by the new liveries and the extravagant devices of his followers!

MACHIAVEL. I am convinced he had no design.

REGENT. Be that as it may, it is bad enough. As I said before, he injures us without benefiting himself. He treats as a jest matters of serious import; and, not to appear negligent and remiss, we are forced to treat seriously what he intended as a jest. Thus one urges on the other; and what we are endeavouring to avert is actually brought to pass. He is more dangerous than the acknowledged head of a conspiracy; and I am much mistaken if it is not all remembered against him at court. I cannot deny that scarcely a day passes in which he does not wound me — deeply wound me.

MACHIAVEL. He appears to me to act on all occasions according to the dictates of his conscience.

REGENT. His conscience has a convenient mirror. His demeanour is often offensive. He carries himself

as if he felt he were the master here, and were withheld by courtesy alone from making us feel his supremacy; as if he would not exactly drive us out of the country; there'll be no need for that.

MACHIAVEL. I entreat you, put not too harsh a construction upon his frank and joyous temper, which treats lightly matters of serious moment. You but injure yourself and him.

REGENT. I interpret nothing. I speak only of inevitable consequences, and I know him. His patent of nobility and the Golden Fleece upon his breast strengthen his confidence, his audacity. Both can protect him against any sudden outbreak of royal displeasure. Consider the matter closely, and he is alone responsible for the whole mischief that has broken out in Flanders. From the first, he connived at the proceedings of the foreign teachers, avoided stringent measures, and perhaps rejoiced in secret that they gave us so much to do. Let me alone; on this occasion, I will give utterance to that which weighs upon my heart; I will not shoot my arrow in vain. I know where he is vulnerable. For he is vulnerable.

MACHIAVEL. Have you summoned the council? Will Orange attend?

REGENT. I have sent for him to Antwerp. I will lay upon their shoulders the burden of responsibility; they shall either strenuously coöperate with me in quelling the evil, or at once declare themselves rebels. Let the letters be completed without delay, and bring them for my signature. Then hasten to despatch the trusty Vasca to Madrid; he is faithful and indefatigable; let him use all diligence, that he may not be anticipated by common report, that my brother may receive the intelligence first through him. I will myself speak with him ere he departs.

MACHIAVEL. Your orders shall be promptly and punctually obeyed.

SCENE III. — *Citizen's House.*

CLARA, *her* MOTHER, BRACKENBURG.

CLARA. Will you not hold the yarn for me, Brackenburg?

BRACKENBURG. I entreat you, excuse me, Clara.

CLARA. What ails you? Why refuse me this trifling service?

BRACKENBURG. When I hold the yarn, I stand as it were spellbound before you, and cannot escape your eyes.

CLARA. Nonsense! Come and hold!

MOTHER. (*knitting in her armchair*) Give us a song! Brackenburg sings so good a second. You used to be merry once, and I had always something to laugh at.

BRACKENBURG. Once!

CLARA. Well, let us sing.

BRACKENBURG. As you please.

CLARA. Merrily, then, and sing away. 'Tis a soldier's song, my favourite. (*She winds yarn, and sings with* BRACKENBURG.)

The drum is resounding,
And shrill the fife plays;
My love, for the battle,
His brave troop arrays;
He lifts his lance high,
And the people he sways.
My blood it is boiling!
My heart throbs pit-pat!
Oh, had I a jacket,
With hose and with hat!

How boldly I'd follow,
And march through the gate;
Through all the wide province
I'd follow him straight.

The foe yield, we capture
Or shoot them! Ah, me!
What heart-thrilling rapture
A soldier to be!

(*During the song,* BRACKENBURG *has frequently looked at* CLARA; *at length his voice falters, his eyes fill with tears, he lets the skein fall, and goes to the window.* CLARA *finishes the song alone, her mother motions to her, half displeased, she rises, advances a few steps toward him, turns back as if irresolute, and again sits down.*

MOTHER. What is going on in the street, Brackenburg? I hear soldiers marching.

BRACKENBURG. It is the regent's body-guard.

CLARA. At this hour? What can it mean? (*She rises and joins* BRACKENBURG *at the window.*) That is not the daily guard; it is more numerous! almost all the troops! Oh, Brackenburg, go! Learn what it means. It must be something unusual. Go, good Brackenburg, do me this favour.

BRACKENBURG. I am going! I will return immediately. (*He offers his hand to* CLARA, *and she gives him hers.*) [*Exit* BRACKENBURG.

MOTHER. Thou sendest him away so soon!

CLARA. I am curious; and, besides — do not be angry, mother — his presence pains me. I never know how I ought to behave toward him. I have done him a wrong, and it goes to my very heart to see how deeply he feels it. Well, it can't be helped now!

MOTHER. He is such a true-hearted fellow!

CLARA. I cannot help it, I must treat him kindly. Often, without a thought, I return the gentle, loving pressure of his hand. I reproach myself that I am deceiving him, that I am nourishing in his heart a vain hope. I am in a sad plight! God knows I

do not willingly deceive him. I do not wish him to hope, yet I cannot let him despair!

MOTHER. That is not as it should be.

CLARA. I liked him once, and in my soul I like him still. I could have married him; yet I believe I was never really in love with him.

MOTHER. Thou wouldst always have been happy with him.

CLARA. I should have been provided for, and have led a quiet life.

MOTHER. And through thy fault it has all been trifled away.

CLARA. I am in a strange position. When I think how it has come to pass, I know it, indeed, and I know it not. But I have only to look upon Egmont, and I understand it all; ay, and stranger things would seem natural then. Oh, what a man he is! All the provinces worship him. And in his arms should not I be the happiest creature in the world?

MOTHER. And how will it be in the future?

CLARA. I only ask does he love me? — does he love me? — as if there were any doubt about it.

MOTHER. One has nothing but anxiety of heart with one's children. Always care and sorrow, whatever may be the end of it! It cannot come to good! Thou hast made thyself wretched! Thou hast made thy mother wretched, too.

CLARA. (*quietly*) Yet thou didst allow it in the beginning.

MOTHER. Alas! I was too indulgent; I am always too indulgent.

CLARA. When Egmont rode by, and I ran to the window, did you chide me then? Did you not come to the window yourself? When he looked up, smiled, nodded, and greeted me, was it displeasing to you? Did you not feel yourself honoured in your daughter?

MOTHER. Go on with your reproaches.

CLARA. (*with emotion*) Then, when he passed more frequently, and we felt sure that it was on my account that he came this way, did you not remark it yourself with secret joy? Did you call me away when I stood behind the window-pane and awaited him?

MOTHER. Could I imagine that it would go so far?

CLARA. (*with faltering voice and repressed tears*) And then, one evening, when, enveloped in his mantle, he surprised us as we sat at our lamp, who busied herself in receiving him, while I remained, lost in astonishment, as if fastened to my chair?

MOTHER. Could I imagine that the prudent Clara would so soon be carried away by this unhappy love? I must now endure that, my daughter —

CLARA. (*bursting into tears*) Mother! How can you? You take pleasure in tormenting me!

MOTHER. (*weeping*) Ay, weep away! Make me yet more wretched by thy grief. Is it not misery enough that my only daughter is a castaway?

CLARA. (*rising and speaking coldly*) A castaway! The beloved of Egmont a castaway! — What princess would not envy the poor Clara a place in his heart? Oh, mother, — my own mother, you were not wont to speak thus! Dear mother, be kind! — Let the people think, let the neighbours whisper, what they like — this chamber, this lowly house, is a paradise since Egmont's love has had its abode in it.

MOTHER. One cannot help liking him, that is true. He is always so kind, frank, and open-hearted.

CLARA. There is not a drop of false blood in his veins. And then, mother, he is indeed the great Egmont; yet, when he comes to me, how tender he is, how kind! How he tries to conceal from me his rank, his bravery! How anxious he is about me! so entirely the man, the friend, the lover.

MOTHER. Do you expect him to-day?

CLARA. Have you not seen how often I go to the window? Have you not noticed how I listen to every noise at the door? — Though I know that he will not come before night, yet, from the time when I rise in the morning, I keep expecting him every moment. Were I but a boy, to follow him always, to the court and everywhere! Could I but carry his colours in the field! —

MOTHER. You were always such a lively, restless creature; even as a little child, now wild, now thoughtful. Will you not dress yourself a little better?

CLARA. Perhaps, mother, if I have nothing better to do. — Yesterday, some of his people went by singing songs in his honour. At least his name was in the songs! The rest I could not understand. My heart leaped up into my throat, — I would fain have called them back if I had not felt ashamed.

MOTHER. Take care! Thy impetuous nature will ruin all. Thou wilt betray thyself before the people; as, not long ago, at thy cousin's, when thou foundest out the woodcut with the description, and didst exclaim, with a cry: "Count Egmont!" — I grew as red as fire.

CLARA. Could I help crying out? It was the battle of Gravelines, and I found in the picture the letter C. and then looked for it in the description below. There it stood, "Count Egmont, with his horse shot under him." I shuddered, and afterward I could not help laughing at the woodcut figure of Egmont, as tall as the neighbouring tower of Gravelines, and the English ships at the side. — When I remember how I used to conceive of a battle, and what an idea I had, as a girl, of Count Egmont; when I listened to descriptions of him, and of all the other earls and princes; and think how it is with me now!

Enter BRACKENBURG.

CLARA. Well, what is going on?

BRACKENBURG. Nothing certain is known. It is rumoured that an insurrection has lately broken out in Flanders; the regent is afraid of its spreading here. The castle is strongly garrisoned, the burghers are crowding to the gates, and the streets are thronged with people. I will hasten at once to my old father. (*As if about to go.*)

CLARA. Shall we see you to-morrow? I must change my dress a little. I am expecting my cousin, and I look too untidy. Come, mother, help me a moment. Take the book, Brackenburg, and bring me such another story.

MOTHER. Farewell.

BRACKENBURG. (*extending his hand*) Your hand!

CLARA. (*refusing hers*) When you come next.

[*Exeunt* MOTHER *and* DAUGHTER.

BRACKENBURG. (*alone*) I had resolved to go away again at once; and yet, when she takes me at my word, and lets me leave her, I feel as if I could go mad. — Wretched man! Does the fate of thy fatherland, does the growing disturbance fail to move thee? — Are countryman and Spaniard the same to thee? and carest thou not who rules, and who is in the right? — I was a different sort of fellow as a schoolboy! — Then, when an exercise in oratory was given, "Brutus' Speech for Liberty," for instance, Fritz was ever the first, and the rector would say: "If it were only spoken more deliberately, the words not all huddled together." — Then my blood boiled, and longed for action. — Now I drag along, bound by the eyes of a maiden. I cannot leave her! yet she, alas, cannot love me! — ah — no — she — she cannot have entirely rejected me — not entirely — yet half love is no love! — I will endure it no longer! — Can it be

true what a friend lately whispered in my ear, that she secretly admits a man into the house by night, when she always sends me away modestly before evening? No, it cannot be true! It is a lie! A base, slanderous lie! Clara is as innocent as I am wretched. — She has rejected me, has thrust me from her heart — and shall I live on thus? I cannot, I will not endure it. Already my native land is convulsed by internal strife, and do I perish abjectly amid the tumult? I will not endure it! When the trumpet sounds, when a shot falls, it thrills through my bone and marrow! But, alas, it does not rouse me! It does not summon me to join the onslaught, to rescue, to dare. — Wretched, degrading position! Better end it at once! Not long ago I threw myself into the water; I sank — but nature in her agony was too strong for me; I felt that I could swim, and saved myself against my will. Could I but forget the time when she loved me, seemed to love me! — Why has this happiness penetrated my very bone and marrow? Why have these hopes, while disclosing to me a distant paradise, consumed all the enjoyment of life? — And that first, that only kiss! — Here (*laying his hand upon the table*), here we were alone, — she had always been kind and friendly toward me, — then she seemed to soften, — she looked at me, — my brain reeled, — I felt her lips on mine, — and — and now? — Die, wretch! Why dost thou hesitate? (*He draws a phial from his pocket.*) Thou healing poison, it shall not have been in vain that I stole thee from my brother's medicine chest! From this anxious fear, this dizziness, this death-agony, thou shalt deliver me at once.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *Square in Brussels.*

JETTER *and a* MASTER CARPENTER (*meeting*).

CARPENTER. Did I not tell you beforehand? Eight days ago at the guild I said there would be serious disturbances!

JETTER. Is it really true that they have plundered the churches in Flanders?

CARPENTER. They have utterly destroyed both churches and chapels. They have left nothing standing but the four bare walls. The lowest rabble! And this it is that damages our good cause. We ought rather to have laid our claims before the regent, formally and decidedly, and then have stood by them. If we speak now, if we assemble now, it will be said that we are joining the insurgents.

JETTER. Ay, so every one thinks at first. Why should you thrust your nose into the mess? The neck is closely connected with it.

CARPENTER. I am always uneasy when tumults arise among the mob — among people who have nothing to lose. They use as a pretext that to which we also must appeal, and plunge the country in misery.

Enter SOEST.

SOEST. Good day, sirs! What news? Is it true that the image-breakers are coming straight in this direction?

CARPENTER. Here they shall touch nothing, at any rate.

SOEST. A soldier came into my shop just now to buy tobacco! I questioned him about the matter.

The regent, though so brave and prudent a lady, has for once lost her presence of mind. Things must be bad, indeed, when she thus takes refuge behind her guards. The castle is strongly garrisoned. It is even rumoured that she means to flee from the town.

CARPENTER. Forth she shall not go! Her presence protects us, and we will ensure her safety better than her mustachioed gentry. If she only maintains our rights and privileges, we will stand faithfully by her.

Enter a SOAPBOILER.

SOAPBOILER. An ugly business this! a bad business! Troubles are beginning; all things are going wrong! Mind you keep quiet, or they'll take you also for rioters.

SOEST. Here come the seven wise men of Greece.

SOAPBOILER. I know there are many who in secret hold with the Calvinists, abuse the bishops, and care not for the king. But a loyal subject, a sincere Catholic! — (*By degrees others join the speakers and listen.*)

Enter VANSEN.

VANSEN. God save you, sirs! What news?

CARPENTER. Have nothing to do with him, he's a dangerous fellow.

JETTER. Is he not secretary to Doctor Wiets?

CARPENTER. He has had several masters. First he was a clerk, and as one patron after another turned him off, on account of his roguish tricks, he now dabbles in the business of notary and advocate, and is a brandy drinker to boot. (*More people gather round and stand in groups.*)

VANSEN. So here you are putting your heads together. Well, it is worth talking about.

SOEST. I think so, too.

VANSEN. Now, if only one of you had heart and another head enough for the work, we might break the Spanish fetters at once.

SOEST. Sirs! you must not talk thus. We have taken our oath to the king.

VANSEN. And the king to us. Mark that!

JETTER. There's sense in that! Tell us your opinion.

OTHERS. Hearken to him; he's a clever fellow. He's sharp enough.

VANSEN. I had an old master once, who possessed a collection of parchments, among which were charters of ancient constitutions, contracts, and privileges. He set great store, too, by the rarest books. One of these contained our whole constitution; how, at first, we Netherlanders had princes of our own, who governed according to hereditary laws, rights, and usages; how our ancestors paid due honour to their sovereign so long as he governed them equitably; and how they were immediately on their guard the moment he was for overstepping his bounds. The states were down upon him at once; for every province, however small, had its own chamber and representatives.

CARPENTER. Hold your tongue! we knew that long ago! Every honest citizen learns as much about the constitution as he needs.

JETTER. Let him speak; one may always learn something.

SOEST. He is quite right.

SEVERAL CITIZENS. Go on! Go on! One does not hear this every day.

VANSEN. You, citizens, forsooth! You live only in the present; and as you tamely follow the trade inherited from your fathers, so you let the government do with you just as it pleases. You make no inquiry into the origin, the history, or the rights of a regent; and, in consequence of this negligence, the Spaniard has drawn the net over your ears.

SOEST. Who cares for that, if one only has daily bread?

JETTER. The devil! Why did not some one come forward and tell us this in time?

VANSEN. I tell it you now. The King of Spain, whose good fortune it is to bear sway over these provinces, has no right to govern them otherwise than the petty princes who formerly possessed them separately. Do you understand that?

JETTER. Explain it to us.

VANSEN. Why, it is as clear as the sun. Must you not be governed according to your provincial laws? How comes that?

A CITIZEN. Certainly!

VANSEN. Has not the burgher of Brussels a different law from the burgher of Antwerp? The burgher of Antwerp from the burgher of Ghent? How comes that?

ANOTHER CITIZEN. By heaven!

VANSEN. But if you let matters run on thus they will soon tell you a different story. Fie on you! Philip, through a woman, now ventures to do what neither Charles the Bold, Frederick the Warrior, nor Charles the Fifth could accomplish.

SOEST. Yes, yes! The old princes tried it also.

VANSEN. Ay! but our ancestors kept a sharp lookout. If they thought themselves aggrieved by their sovereign, they would perhaps get his son and heir into their hands, detain him as a hostage, and surrender him only on the most favourable conditions. Our fathers were men! They knew their own interests! They knew how to lay hold on what they wanted, and to get it established! They were men of the right sort; and hence it is that our privileges are so clearly defined, our liberties so well secured.

SOEST. What are you saying about our liberties?

ALL. Our liberties! Our privileges! Tell us about our privileges.

VANSEN. All the provinces have their peculiar advantages, but we of Brabant are the most splendidly provided for. I have read it all.

SOEST. Say on.

JETTER. Let us hear.

A CITIZEN. Pray do.

VANSEN. First, it stands written: — The Duke of Brabant shall be to us a good and faithful sovereign.

SOEST. Good! Stands it so?

JETTER. Faithful? Is that true?

VANSEN. As I tell you. He is bound to us as we are to him. Secondly: in the exercise of his authority he shall neither exert arbitrary power nor exhibit caprice himself, nor shall he, either directly or indirectly sanction them in others.

JETTER. Bravo! Bravo! Not exert arbitrary power.

SOEST. Nor exhibit caprice.

ANOTHER. And not sanction them in others! That is the main point. Not sanction them, either directly or indirectly.

VANSEN. In express words.

JETTER. Get us the book.

A CITIZEN. Yes, we must see it.

OTHERS. The book! The book!

ANOTHER. We will to the regent with the book.

ANOTHER. Sir doctor, you shall be spokesman.

SOAPBOILER. Oh, the dolts!

OTHERS. Something more out of the book!

SOAPBOILER. I'll knock his teeth down his throat if he says another word.

PEOPLE. We'll see who dares to lay hands upon him. Tell us about our privileges! Have we any more privileges?

VANSEN. Many, very good and very wholesome ones, too. Thus it stands: The sovereign shall neither benefit the clergy, nor increase their number, without

the consent of the nobles and of the states. Mark that! Nor shall he alter the constitution of the country.

SOEST. Stands it so?

VANSEN. I'll show it you, as it was written down two or three centuries ago.

A CITIZEN. And we tolerate the new bishop? The nobles must protect us, we will make a row else!

OTHERS. And we suffer ourselves to be intimidated by the Inquisition?

VANSEN. It is your own fault.

PEOPLE. We have Egmont! We have Orange! They will protect our interests.

VANSEN. Your brothers in Flanders are beginning the good work.

SOAPBOILER. Dog! (*Strikes him.*)

OTHERS *oppose the* SOAPBOILER, *and exclaim.* Are you also a Spaniard?

ANOTHER. What! This honourable man?

ANOTHER. This learned man?

(*They attack the* SOAPBOILER.)

CARPENTER. For heaven's sake, peace!

(*Others mingle in the fray.*)

CARPENTER. Citizens, what means this?

(*Boys whistle, throw stones, set on dogs; citizens stand and gape, people come running up, others walk quietly to and fro, others play all sorts of pranks, shout and huzza.*)

OTHERS. Freedom and privilege! Privilege and freedom!

Enter EGMONT *with followers.*

EGMONT. Peace! Peace! good people. What is the matter? Peace, I say! Separate them.

CARPENTER. My good lord, you come like an angel from heaven. Hush! See you nothing? Count Egmont! Honour to Count Egmont!

EGMONT. Here, too! What are you about? Burgher against burgher! Does not even the neighbourhood of our royal mistress oppose a barrier to this frenzy? Disperse yourselves, and go about your business. 'Tis a bad sign when you thus keep holiday on working days. How did the disturbance begin?

(*The tumult gradually subsides, and the people gather around* EGMONT.)

CARPENTER. They are fighting about their privileges.

EGMONT. Which they will forfeit through their own folly — and who are you? You seem honest people.

CARPENTER. 'Tis our wish to be so.

EGMONT. Your calling?

CARPENTER. A carpenter, and master of the guild.

EGMONT. And you?

SOEST. A shopkeeper.

EGMONT. And you?

JETTER. A tailor.

EGMONT. I remember, you were employed upon the liveries of my people. Your name is Jetter.

JETTER. To think of your Grace remembering it!

EGMONT. I do not easily forget any one whom I have seen or conversed with. Do what you can, good people, to keep the peace; you stand in bad enough repute already. Provoke not the king still farther. The power, after all, is in his hands. An honest burgher, who maintains himself industriously, has everywhere as much freedom as he needs.

CARPENTER. To be sure; that is just our misfortune! With all due deference, your Grace, 'tis the idle portion of the community, your drunkards and vagabonds, who quarrel for want of something to do, and clamour about privilege because they are hungry; they impose upon the curious and the credulous, and, in order to obtain a pot of beer, excite disturbances that will bring misery upon thousands. That is just what they want. We keep our houses and chests too

well guarded; they would fain drive us away from them with firebrands.

EGMONT. You shall have all needful assistance; measures have been taken to stem the evil by force. Make a firm stand against the new doctrines, and do not imagine that privileges are secured by sedition. Remain at home; suffer no crowds to assemble in the streets. Sensible people can accomplish much. (*In the meantime the crowd has for the most part dispersed.*)

CARPENTER. Thanks, your Excellency — thanks for your good opinion! We will do what in us lies. (*Exit* EGMONT.) A gracious lord! A true Netherlander! Nothing of the Spaniard about him.

JETTER. If we had only him for a regent. 'Tis a pleasure to follow him.

SOEST. The king won't hear of that. He takes care to appoint his own people to the place.

JETTER. Did you notice his dress? It was of the newest fashion — after the Spanish cut.

CARPENTER. A handsome gentleman.

JETTER. His head now were a dainty morsel for a headsman.

SOEST. Are you mad? What are you thinking about?

JETTER. It is stupid enough that such an idea should come into one's head! But so it is. Whenever I see a fine, long neck, I cannot help thinking how well it would suit the block. These cursed executions! One cannot get them out of one's head. When the lads are swimming, and I chance to see a naked back, I think forthwith of the dozens I have seen beaten with rods. If I meet a portly gentleman, I fancy I already see him being roasted at the stake. At night, in my dreams, I am tortured in every limb; one cannot have a single hour's enjoyment; all merriment and fun have long been forgotten. These terrible images seem burnt in upon my brain.

Scene II. — Egmont's *Residence.*

His Secretary (*at a desk with papers. He rises impatiently*).

Secretary. He is not yet here! And I have been waiting already for two hours, pen in hand, the paper before me; and just to-day I am anxious to be off early. The floor burns under my feet. I can with difficulty restrain my impatience. "Be punctual to the hour." Such was his parting injunction; now he comes not. There is so much business to get through, I shall not have finished before midnight. He overlooks one's faults, it is true; methinks it would be better, though, were he more strict, so he dismissed one at the appointed time. One could then arrange one's plans. It is now full two hours since he came away from the regent; who knows whom he may have chanced to meet by the way?

Enter Egmont.

Egmont. Well, how do matters look?

Secretary. I am ready, and three couriers are waiting.

Egmont. I have detained you too long; you look somewhat out of humour.

Secretary. In obedience to your command I have been in attendance for some time. Here are the papers.

Egmont. Donna Elvira will be angry with me when she learns that I have detained you.

Secretary. You are pleased to jest.

Egmont. No, no. Be not ashamed. I admire your taste. She is pretty, and I have no objection that you should have a friend at the castle. What say the letters?

SECRETARY. Much, my lord, but withal little that is satisfactory.

EGMONT. 'Tis well that we have pleasures at home; we have the less occasion to seek them from abroad. Is there much that requires attention?

SECRETARY. Enough, my lord; three couriers are in attendance.

EGMONT. Proceed! The most important.

SECRETARY. All are important.

EGMONT. One after the other; only be prompt.

SECRETARY. Captain Breda sends an account of the occurrences that have further taken place in Ghent and the surrounding districts. The tumult is for the most part allayed.

EGMONT. He doubtless reports individual acts of folly and temerity?

SECRETARY. He does, my lord.

EGMONT. Spare me the recital.

SECRETARY. Six of the mob who tore down the image of the Virgin at Verviers have been arrested. He inquires whether they are to be hanged like the others.

EGMONT. I am weary of hanging; let them be flogged and discharged.

SECRETARY. There are two women; are they to be flogged also?

EGMONT. He may admonish them and let them go.

SECRETARY. Brink, of Breda's company, wants to marry; the captain hopes you will not allow it. There are so many women among the troops, he writes, that when on the march they resemble a gang of gipsies rather than regular soldiers.

EGMONT. We must overlook it in his case. He is a fine young fellow, and moreover entreated me so earnestly before I came away. This must be the last time, however; though it grieves me to refuse the poor fellows their best pastime; they have enough without that to torment them.

SECRETARY. Two of your people, Seter and Hart, have ill-treated a damsel, the daughter of an innkeeper. They got her alone, and she could not escape from them.

EGMONT. If she be an honest maiden, and they used violence, let them be flogged three days in succession; and if they have any property, let him retain as much as will portion the girl.

SECRETARY. One of the foreign preachers has been discovered passing secretly through Comines. He swore that he was on the point of leaving for France. According to orders, he ought to be beheaded.

EGMONT. Let him be conducted quietly to the frontier, and there admonished that the next time he will not escape so easily.

SECRETARY. A letter from your steward. He writes that money comes in slowly; he can with difficulty send you the required sum within the week; the late disturbances have thrown everything into the greatest confusion.

EGMONT. Money must be had! It is for him to look to the means.

SECRETARY. He says he will do his utmost, and at length proposes to sue and imprison Raymond, who has been so long in your debt.

EGMONT. But he has promised to pay!

SECRETARY. The last time he fixed a fortnight himself.

EGMONT. Well, grant him another fortnight; after that he may proceed against him.

SECRETARY. You do well. His non-payment of the money proceeds not from inability, but from want of inclination. He will trifle no longer when he sees that you are in earnest. The steward further proposes to withhold, for half a month, the pensions which you allow to the old soldiers, widows, and others. In the meantime some expedient may be devised; they must make their arrangements accordingly.

EGMONT. But what arrangements can be made here? These poor people want the money more than I. He must not think of it.

SECRETARY. How then, my lord, is he to raise the required sum?

EGMONT. It his business to think of that. He was told so in a former letter.

SECRETARY. And therefore he makes these proposals.

EGMONT. They will never do; — he must think of something else. Let him suggest expedients that are admissible, and, above all, let him procure the money.

SECRETARY. I have again before me the letter from Count Oliva. Pardon my recalling it to your remembrance. Above all others, the aged count deserves a detailed reply. You proposed writing to him with your own hand. Doubtless, he loves you as a father.

EGMONT. I cannot command the time; — and of all detestable things, writing is to me the most detestable. You imitate my hand so admirably, do you write in my name. I am expecting Orange. I cannot do it; — I wish, however, that something soothing should be written to allay his fears.

SECRETARY. Just give me a notion of what you wish to communicate; I will at once draw up the answer, and lay it before you. It shall be so written that it might pass for your hand in a court of justice.

EGMONT. Give me the letter. (*After glancing over it.*) Good, honest, old man! Wert thou so cautious in thy own youth? Didst thou never mount a breach? Didst thou remain in the rear of battle at the suggestion of prudence? — What affectionate solicitude! He has, indeed, my safety and happiness at heart, but considers not that he who lives but to save his life is already dead. — Charge him not to be anxious on my account; I act as circumstances require, and shall be upon my guard. Let him use his influence

at court in my favour, and be assured of my warmest thanks.

SECRETARY. Is that all? He expects still more.

EGMONT. What can I say? If you choose to write more fully, do so. The matter turns upon a single point; he would have me live as I cannot live. That I am joyous, live fast, take matters easily, is my good fortune; nor would I exchange it for the safety of a sepulchre. My blood rebels against the Spanish mode of life, nor have I the least inclination to regulate my movements by the new and cautious measures of the court. Do I live only to think of life? Am I to forego the enjoyment of the present moment in order to secure the next? And must that in its turn be consumed in anxieties and idle fears?

SECRETARY. I entreat you, my lord, be not so harsh toward the venerable man. You are wont to be friendly toward every one. Say a kindly word to allay the anxiety of your noble friend. See how considerate he is, with what delicacy he warns you.

EGMONT. Yet he harps continually on the same string. He knows of old how I detest these admonitions. They serve only to perplex and are of no avail. What if I were a somnambulist, and trod the giddy summit of a lofty house, — were it the part of friendship to call me by my name, to warn me of my danger, to waken, to kill me? Let each choose his own path, and provide for his own safety.

SECRETARY. It may become you to be without a fear, but those who know and love you —

EGMONT. (*looking over the letter*) Then he recalls the old story of our sayings and doings one evening in the wantonness of conviviality and wine; and what conclusions and inferences were thence drawn and circulated throughout the whole kingdom! Well, we had a cap and bells embroidered on the sleeves of our servants' liveries, and afterward exchanged this sense-

less device for a bundle of arrows; — a still more dangerous symbol for those who are bent upon discovering a meaning where nothing is meant. These and similar follies were conceived and brought forth in a moment of merriment. It was at our suggestion that a noble troop, with beggars' wallets and a self-chosen nickname, with mock humility recalled the king's duty to his remembrance. It was at our suggestion, too — well, what does it signify? Is a carnival jest to be construed into high treason? Are we to be grudged the scanty, variegated rags, wherewith a youthful spirit and heated imagination would adorn the poor nakedness of life? Take life too seriously, and what is it worth? If the morning wake us to no new joys, if in the evening we have no pleasures to hope for, is it worth the trouble of dressing and undressing? Does the sun shine on me to-day that I may reflect on what happened yesterday? That I may endeavour to foresee and control what can neither be foreseen nor controlled, — the destiny of the morrow? Spare me these reflections, we will leave them to scholars and courtiers. Let them ponder and contrive, creep hither and thither, and surreptitiously achieve their ends. — If you can make use of these suggestions, without swelling your letter into a volume, it is well. Everything appears of exaggerated importance to the good old man. 'Tis thus the friend, who has long held our hand, grasps it more warmly ere he quits his hold.

SECRETARY. Pardon me, the pedestrian grows dizzy when he beholds the charioteer drive past with whirling speed.

EGMONT. Child! Child! Forbear! As if goaded by invisible spirits, the sun-steeds of time bear onward the light car of our destiny; and nothing remains for us, but, with calm self-possession, firmly to grasp the reins, and now right, now left, to steer the wheels here from the precipice and there from the rock. Whither

he is hasting, who knows? He hardly remembers whence he came!

SECRETARY. My lord! my lord!

EGMONT. I stand high, but I can and must rise yet higher. Courage, strength, and hope possess my soul. Not yet have I attained the height of my ambition; that once achieved, I want to stand firmly and without fear. Should I fall, should a thunder-clap, a storm-blast, ay, a false step of my own, precipitate me into the abyss, so be it! I shall lie there with thousands of others. I have never disdained, even for a trifling stake, to throw the bloody die with my gallant comrades; and shall I hesitate now, when all that is most precious in life is set upon the cast?

SECRETARY. Oh, my lord! you know not what you say! May Heaven protect you!

EGMONT. Collect your papers. Orange is coming. Despatch what is most urgent, that the couriers may set forth before the gates are closed. The rest may wait. Leave the count's letter till to-morrow. Fail not to visit Elvira, and greet her from me. Inform yourself concerning the regent's health. She cannot be well, though she would fain conceal it.

[*Exit* SECRETARY.

Enter ORANGE.

EGMONT. Welcome, Orange; you appear somewhat disturbed.

ORANGE. What say you to our conference with the regent?

EGMONT. I found nothing extraordinary in her manner of receiving us. I have often seen her thus before. She appeared to me to be somewhat indisposed.

ORANGE. Marked you not that she was more reserved than usual? She began by cautiously approving our conduct during the late insurrection; glanced

at the false light in which, nevertheless, it might be viewed; and finally turned the discourse to her favourite topic — that her gracious demeanour, her friendship for us Netherlanders, had never been sufficiently recognised, never appreciated as it deserved; that nothing came to a prosperous issue; that for her part she was beginning to grow weary of it; that the king must at last resolve upon other measures. Did you hear that?

EGMONT. Not all; I was thinking at the time of something else. She is a woman, good Orange, and all women expect that every one shall submit passively to their gentle yoke; that every Hercules shall lay aside his lion's skin, assume the distaff, and swell their train; and, because they are themselves peaceably inclined, imagine, forsooth, that the ferment which seizes a nation, the storm which powerful rivals excite against one another, may be allayed by one soothing word, and the most discordant elements be brought to unite in tranquil harmony at their feet. 'Tis thus with her; and since she cannot accomplish her object, why, she has no resource left but to lose her temper, to menace us with direful prospects for the future, and to threaten to take her departure.

ORANGE. Think you not that this time she will fulfil her threat?

EGMONT. Never! How often have I seen her actually prepared for the journey? Whither should she go? Being here a stadtholder, a queen, think you that she could endure to spend her days in insignificance at her brother's court, or to repair to Italy, and there drag on her existence among her old family connections?

ORANGE. She is held incapable of this determination, because you have already seen her hesitate and draw back; nevertheless, it is in her to take this step; new circumstances may impel her to the long-delayed

resolve. What if she were to depart, and the king to send another?

EGMONT. Why, he would come, and he also would have business enough upon his hands. He would arrive with vast projects and schemes to reduce all things to order, to subjugate, and combine; and to-day he would be occupied with this trifle, to-morrow with that, and the day following have to deal with some unexpected hinderance. He would spend one month in forming plans, another in mortification at their failure, and half a year would be consumed in cares for a single province. With him also time would pass, his head grow dizzy, and things hold on their ordinary course, till, instead of sailing into the open sea, according to the plan which he had previously marked out, he might thank God if, amid the tempest, he were able to keep his vessel off the rocks.

ORANGE. What if the king were advised to try an experiment?

EGMONT. Which should be —?

ORANGE. To try how the body would get on without the head.

EGMONT. What?

ORANGE. Egmont, our interests have for years weighed upon my heart; I ever stand as over a chessboard, and regard no move of my adversary as insignificant; and as men of science carefully investigate the secrets of nature, so I hold it to be the duty, ay, the very vocation of a prince, to acquaint himself with the dispositions and intentions of all parties. I have reason to fear an outbreak. The king has long acted according to certain principles; he finds that they do not lead to a prosperous issue; what more probable than that he should seek it some other way?

EGMONT. I do not believe it! When a man grows old, has attempted much, and finds that the world

cannot be made to move according to his will, he must needs grow weary of it at last.

ORANGE. One thing he has not yet attempted.

EGMONT. What?

ORANGE. To spare the people, and to put an end to the princes.

EGMONT. How many have long been haunted by this dread? There is no cause for such anxiety.

ORANGE. Once I felt anxious; gradually I became suspicious; suspicion has at length grown into certainty.

EGMONT. Has the king more faithful servants than ourselves?

ORANGE. We serve him after our own fashion; and, between ourselves, it must be confessed that we understand pretty well how to make the interests of the king square with our own.

EGMONT. And who does not? He has our duty and submission in so far as they are his due.

ORANGE. But what if he should arrogate still more, and regard as disloyalty what we esteem the maintenance of our just rights?

EGMONT. We shall know in that case how to defend ourselves. Let him assemble the Knights of the Golden Fleece; we will submit ourselves to their decision.

ORANGE. What if the sentence were to precede the trial? punishment the sentence?

EGMONT. It were an injustice of which Philip is incapable; a folly which I cannot impute either to him or to his counsellors.

ORANGE. And what if they were both unjust and foolish?

EGMONT. No, Orange, it is impossible. Who would venture to lay hands on us? The attempt to capture us were a vain and fruitless enterprise. No, they dare not raise the standard of tyranny so high. The breeze

that should waft these tidings over the land would kindle a mighty conflagration. And what object would they have in view? The king alone has no power either to judge or to condemn us, and would they attempt our lives by assassination? They cannot intend it. A terrible league would unite the entire people. Direful hate and eternal separation from the crown of Spain would, on the instant, be forcibly declared.

ORANGE. The flames would then rage over our grave, and the blood of our enemies flow, a vain oblation. Let us consider, Egmont.

EGMONT. But how could they effect this purpose?

ORANGE. Alva is on the way.

EGMONT. I do not believe it.

ORANGE. I know it.

EGMONT. The regent appeared to know nothing of it.

ORANGE. And, therefore, the stronger is my conviction. The regent will give place to him. I know his bloodthirsty disposition, and he brings an army with him.

EGMONT. To harass the provinces anew? The people will be exasperated to the last degree.

ORANGE. Their leaders will be secured.

EGMONT. No! No!

ORANGE. Let us retire, each to his province. There we can strengthen ourselves; the duke will not begin with open violence.

EGMONT. Must we not greet him when he comes?

ORANGE. We will delay.

EGMONT. What if, on his arrival, he should summon us in the king's name?

ORANGE. We will answer evasively.

EGMONT. And if he is urgent?

ORANGE. We will excuse ourselves.

EGMONT. If he insist?

ORANGE. We shall be the less disposed to come.

EGMONT. Then war is declared; and we are rebels. Do not suffer prudence to mislead you, Orange. I know it is not fear that makes you yield. Consider this step.

ORANGE. I have considered it.

EGMONT. Consider for what you are answerable if you are wrong. For the most fatal war that ever yet desolated a country. Your refusal is the signal that at once summons the provinces to arms, that justifies every cruelty for which Spain has hitherto so anxiously sought a pretext. With a single nod you will excite to the direst confusion what, with patient effort, we have so long kept in abeyance. Think of the towns, the nobles, the people; think of commerce, agriculture, trade! Realise the murder, the desolation! Calmly the soldier beholds his comrade fall beside him in the battle-field. But toward you, carried down by the stream, will float the corpses of citizens, of children, of maidens, till, aghast with horror, you shall no longer know whose cause you are defending, since you will see those for whose liberty you drew the sword perish around you. And what will be your emotions when conscience whispers, "It was for my own safety that I drew it?"

ORANGE. We are not ordinary men, Egmont. If it becomes us to sacrifice ourselves for thousands, it becomes us no less to spare ourselves for thousands.

EGMONT. He who spares himself becomes an object of suspicion even to himself.

ORANGE. He who is sure of his own motives can with confidence advance or retreat.

EGMONT. Your own act will render certain the evil that you dread.

ORANGE. Wisdom and courage alike prompt us to meet an inevitable evil.

EGMONT. When the danger is imminent the faintest hope should be taken into account.

ORANGE. We have not the smallest footing left; we are on the very brink of the precipice.

EGMONT. Is the king's favour on ground so narrow?

ORANGE. Not narrow, perhaps, but slippery.

EGMONT. By heavens! he is belied. I cannot endure that he should be so meanly thought of! He is Charles's son, and incapable of meanness.

ORANGE. Kings of course do nothing mean.

EGMONT. He should be better known.

ORANGE. Our knowledge counsels us not to wait the result of a dangerous experiment.

EGMONT. No experiment is dangerous the result of which we have the courage to meet.

ORANGE. You are irritated, Egmont.

EGMONT. I must see with my own eyes.

ORANGE. Oh, that for once you saw with mine! My friend, because your eyes are open you imagine that you see. I go! Await Alva's arrival, and God be with you! My refusal to do so may perhaps save you. The dragon may deem the prey not worth seizing if he cannot swallow us both. Perhaps he may delay in order more surely to execute his purpose; in the meantime you may see matters in their true light. But, then, be prompt! Lose not a moment! Save, — oh, save yourself! Farewell! — Let nothing escape your vigilance: — how many troops he brings with him; how he garrisons the town; what force the regent retains; how your friends are prepared. Send me tidings — Egmont —

EGMONT. What would you?

ORANGE. (*grasping his hand*) Be persuaded! Go with me!

EGMONT. What? Tears, Orange?

ORANGE. To weep for a lost friend is not unmanly.

EGMONT. You deem me lost?

ORANGE. You are lost! Consider! Only a brief respite is left you. Farewell. [*Exit.*

EGMONT. Strange that the thoughts of other men should exert such an influence over us. These fears would never have entered my mind; and this man infects me with his solicitude! Away! 'Tis a foreign drop in my blood! Kind nature cast it forth! And to erase the furrowed lines from my brow there yet remains, indeed, a friendly means.

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Palace of the* REGENT.

MARGARET OF PARMA.

REGENT. I might have expected it. Ha! when we live immersed in anxiety and toil we imagine that we achieve the utmost that is possible; while he, who, from a distance, looks on and commands, believes that he requires only the possible. Oh, ye kings! I had not thought it could have galled me thus. It is so sweet to reign! — and to abdicate? I know not how my father could do so; but I will also.

MACHIAVEL *appears in the background.*

REGENT. Approach, Machiavel. I am pondering over my brother's letter.

MACHIAVEL. May I know what it contains?

REGENT. As much tender consideration for me as anxiety for his states. He extols the firmness, the industry, the fidelity, with which I have hitherto watched over the interests of his majesty in these provinces. He condoles with me that the unbridled people occasion me so much trouble. He is so thoroughly convinced of the depth of my views, so ex-

traordinarily satisfied with the prudence of my conduct, that I must almost say the letter is too politely written for a king — certainly for a brother.

MACHIAVEL. It is not the first time that he has testified to you his just satisfaction.

REGENT. But the first time that it is a mere rhetorical figure.

MACHIAVEL. I do not understand you.

REGENT. You soon will. For after this preamble he is of opinion that without soldiers, without a small army, indeed, I shall always cut a sorry figure here! We did wrong, he says, to withdraw our troops from the provinces at the remonstrance of the inhabitants; a garrison, he thinks, which shall press upon the neck of the burgher, will prevent him, by its weight, from making any lofty spring.

MACHIAVEL. It would irritate the public mind to the last degree.

REGENT. The king thinks, however, do you hear? — he thinks that a clever general, one who never listens to reason, will be able to deal promptly with all parties; — people and nobles, citizens and peasants; he therefore sends, with a powerful army, the Duke of Alva.

MACHIAVEL. Alva?

REGENT. You are surprised.

MACHIAVEL. You say he sends; he asks, doubtless, whether he should send.

REGENT. The king asks not, he sends.

MACHIAVEL. You will then have an experienced warrior in your service.

REGENT. In my service? Speak your mind, Machiavel.

MACHIAVEL. I would not anticipate you.

REGENT. And I would I could dissimulate. It wounds me — wounds me to the quick. I had rather my brother would speak his mind than attach his

signature to formal epistles drawn up by a secretary of state.

MACHIAVEL. Can they not comprehend?

REGENT. I know them both within and without. They would fain make a clean sweep; and since they cannot set about it themselves, they give their confidence to any one who comes with a besom in his hand. Oh, it seems to me as if I saw the king and his council worked upon this tapestry.

MACHIAVEL. So distinctly!

REGENT. No feature is wanting. There are good men among them. The honest Roderigo, so experienced, and so moderate, who does not aim too high, yet lets nothing sink too low; the upright Alonzo, the diligent Freneda, the steadfast Las Vargas, and others who join them when the good party are in power. But there sits the hollow-eyed Toledan, with brazen front and deep fire-glance, muttering between his teeth about womanish softness, ill-timed concession, and that women can ride trained steeds well enough, but are themselves bad masters of the horse, and the like pleasantries, which in former times I have been compelled to hear from political gentlemen.

MACHIAVEL. You have chosen good colours for your picture.

REGENT. Confess, Machiavel, among the tints from which I might select, there is no hue so livid, so jaundice-like as Alva's complexion, and the colour he is wont to paint with. He regards every one as a blasphemer or traitor; for under this head they can all be racked, impaled, quartered, and burnt at pleasure. The good I have accomplished here appears as nothing seen from a distance, just because it is good. Then he dwells on every outbreak that is past, recalls every disturbance that is quieted, and brings before the king such a picture of mutiny, sedition, and audacity, that we appear to him to be actually devouring one

another, when with us the transient explosion of a rude people has been long forgotten. Thus he conceives a cordial hatred for the poor people; he views them with horror, as beasts and monsters; looks around for fire and sword, and imagines that by such means human beings are subdued.

MACHIAVEL. You appear to me too vehement; you take the matter too seriously. Do you not remain regent?

REGENT. I am aware of that. He will bring his instructions. I am old enough in state affairs to understand how people can be supplanted without being actually deprived of office. First, he will produce a commission couched in terms somewhat obscure and equivocal; he will stretch his authority, for the power is in his hands; if I complain, he will hint at secret instructions; if I desire to see them, he will answer evasively; if I insist, he will produce a paper of totally different import; and if this fail to satisfy me, he will go on precisely as if I had never interfered. Meanwhile he will have accomplished what I dread, and will have frustrated my most cherished schemes.

MACHIAVEL. I wish I could contradict you.

REGENT. His harshness and cruelty will again arouse the turbulent spirit, which, with unspeakable patience, I have succeeded in quelling; I shall see my work destroyed before my eyes, and have besides to bear the blame of his wrong-doing.

MACHIAVEL. Await it, your Highness.

REGENT. I have sufficient self-command to remain quiet. Let him come; I will make way for him with the best grace ere he pushes me aside.

MACHIAVEL. So important a step thus suddenly?

REGENT. 'Tis harder than you imagine. He who is accustomed to rule, to hold daily in his hand the destiny of thousands, descends from the throne as into

the grave. Better thus, however, than linger a spectre among the living, and with hollow aspect endeavour to maintain a place which another has inherited, and already possesses and enjoys.

SCENE II. — CLARA'S *Dwelling.*

CLARA *and her* MOTHER.

MOTHER. Such a love as Brackenburg's I have never seen; I thought it was to be found only in romance books.

CLARA. (*walking up and down the room, humming a song*)

With love's thrilling rapture
What joy can compare!

MOTHER. He suspects thy intercourse with Egmont; and yet, if thou wouldst but treat him somewhat kindly, I do believe he would marry thee still, if thou wouldst have him.

CLARA. (*sings*)

Blissful
And tearful,
With thought-teeming brain;
Hoping
And fearing
In wavering pain;
Now shouting in triumph,
Now sunk in despair; —
With love's thrilling rapture
What joy can compare!

MOTHER. Have done with such baby nonsense!

CLARA. Nay, do not abuse it; 'tis a song of marvellous virtue. Many a time have I lulled a grown child to sleep with it.

MOTHER. Ay! Thou canst think of nothing but thy love. If only it did not put everything else out of thy head. Thou shouldst have more regard for Brackenburg, I tell thee. He may make thee happy yet some day.

CLARA. He?

MOTHER. Oh, yes! A time will come! You children live only in the present, and give no ear to our experience. Youth and happy love, all has an end; and there comes a time when one thanks God if one has any corner to creep into.

CLARA. (*shudders, and after a pause starts up*) Mother, let that time come — like death. To think of it beforehand is horrible! And if it come! If we must — then — we will bear ourselves as we may. Live without thee, Egmont! (*Weeping.*) No! It is impossible.

Enter EGMONT (*enveloped in a horseman's cloak, his hat drawn over his face*).

EGMONT. Clara!

CLARA. (*utters a cry and starts back*) Egmont! (*She hastens toward him.*) Egmont! (*She embraces and leans upon him.*) O thou good, kind, sweet Egmont! Art thou come? Art thou here, indeed!

EGMONT. Good evening, mother!

MOTHER. God save you, noble sir! My daughter has well-nigh pined to death because you have stayed away so long; she talks and sings about you the live-long day.

EGMONT. You will give me some supper?

MOTHER. You do us too much honour. If we only had anything —

CLARA. Certainly! Be quiet, mother; I have provided everything; there is something prepared. Do not betray me, mother.

MOTHER. There's little enough.

CLARA. Never mind! And then I think when he is with me I am never hungry; so he cannot, I should think, have any great appetite when I am with him.

EGMONT. Do you think so? (CLARA *stamps with her foot and turns pettishly away.*) What ails you?

CLARA. How cold you are to-day! You have not yet offered me a kiss. Why do you keep your arms enveloped in your mantle, like a new-born babe? It becomes neither a soldier nor a lover to keep his arms muffled up.

EGMONT. Sometimes, dearest, sometimes. When the soldier stands in ambush and would delude the foe, he collects his thoughts, gathers his mantle around him, and matures his plan; and a lover —

MOTHER. Will you not take a seat and make yourself comfortable? I must to the kitchen, Clara thinks of nothing when you are here. You must put up with what we have.

EGMONT. Your good-will is the best seasoning.

[*Exit* MOTHER.

CLARA. And what then is my love?

EGMONT. Just what thou wilt.

CLARA. Liken it to anything, if you have the heart.

EGMONT. But first. (*He flings aside his mantle, and appears arrayed in a magnificent dress.*)

CLARA. Oh, heavens!

EGMONT. Now my arms are free! (*Embraces her.*)

CLARA. Don't. You will spoil your dress. (*She steps back.*) How magnificent! I dare not touch you.

EGMONT. Art thou satisfied? I promised to come once arrayed in Spanish fashion.

CLARA. I had ceased to remind you of it; I thought you did not like it — ah, and the Golden Fleece!

EGMONT. Thou seest it now.

CLARA. And did the emperor really hang it round thy neck?

EGMONT. He did, my child! And this chain and Order invest the wearer with the noblest privileges. On earth I acknowledge no judge over my actions, except the grand master of the Order, with the assembled chapter of knights.

CLARA. Oh, thou mightest let the whole world sit in judgment over thee. The velvet is too splendid! and the braiding! and the embroidery! One knows not where to begin.

EGMONT. There, look thy fill.

CLARA. And the Golden Fleece! You told me its history, and said it is the symbol of everything great and precious, of everything that can be merited and won by diligence and toil. It is very precious — I may liken it to thy love; — even so I wear it next my heart; — and then —

EGMONT. What wilt thou say?

CLARA. And then again it is not like.

EGMONT. How so?

CLARA. I have not won it by diligence and toil, I have not deserved it.

EGMONT. It is otherwise in love. Thou dost deserve it because thou hast not sought it — and, for the most part, those only obtain who seek it not.

CLARA. Is it from thine own experience that thou hast learned this? Didst thou make that proud remark in reference to thyself? Thou, whom all the people love?

EGMONT. Would that I had done something for them! That I could do anything for them! It is their own good pleasure to love.

CLARA. Thou hast doubtless been with the regent to-day?

EGMONT. I have.

CLARA. Art thou upon good terms with her?

EGMONT. So it would appear. We are kind and serviceable to each other.

CLARA. And in thy heart?

EGMONT. I like her. True, we have each our own views; but that is nothing to the purpose. She is an excellent woman, knows with whom she has to deal, and would be penetrating enough were she not quite so suspicious. I give her plenty of employment, because she is always suspecting some secret motive in my conduct when, in fact, I have none.

CLARA. Really none?

EGMONT. Well, with one little exception, perhaps. All wine deposits lees in the cask in the course of time. Orange furnishes her still better entertainment, and is a perpetual riddle. He has got the credit of harbouring some secret design; and she studies his brow to discover his thoughts, and his steps, to learn in what direction they are bent.

CLARA. Does she dissemble?

EGMONT. She is regent — and do you ask?

CLARA. Pardon me; I meant to say, is she false?

EGMONT. Neither more nor less than every one who has his own objects to attain.

CLARA. I should never feel at home in the world. But she has a masculine spirit, and is another sort of woman than we housewives and seamstresses. She is great, steadfast, resolute.

EGMONT. Yes, when matters are not too much involved. For once, however, she is a little disconcerted.

CLARA. How is that?

EGMONT. She has a moustache, too, on her upper lip, and occasionally an attack of the gout. A regular Amazon.

CLARA. A majestic woman! I should dread to appear before her.

EGMONT. Yet thou art not wont to be timid! It would not be fear, only maidenly bashfulness.

(CLARA *casts down her eyes, takes his hand, and leans upon him.*)

EGMONT. I understand thee, dearest! Thou mayest raise thine eyes. (*He kisses her eyes.*)

CLARA. Let me be silent! Let me embrace thee! Let me look into thine eyes, and find there everything — hope and comfort, joy and sorrow! (*She embraces and gazes on him.*) Tell me! Oh, tell me! It seems so strange — art thou, indeed, Egmont? Count Egmont? The great Egmont, who makes so much noise in the world, who figures in the newspapers, who is the support and stay of the provinces?

EGMONT. No, Clara, I am not he.

CLARA. How?

EGMONT. Seest thou, Clara! Let me sit down! (*He seats himself, she kneels on a footstool before him, rests her arms on his knees, and looks up in his face.*) That Egmont is a morose, cold, unbending Egmont, obliged to be upon his guard, to assume now this appearance and now that; harassed, misapprehended and perplexed, when the crowd esteem him light-hearted and gay; beloved by a people who do not know their own mind; honoured and extolled by the intractable multitude; surrounded by friends in whom he dares not confide; observed by men who are on the watch to supplant him; toiling and striving, often without an object, generally without a reward. Oh, let me conceal how it fares with him, let me not speak of his feelings! But this Egmont, Clara, is calm, unreserved, happy, beloved and known by the best of hearts, which is also thoroughly known to him, and which he presses to his own with unbounded confidence and love. (*He embraces her.*) This is thy Egmont.

CLARA. So let me die! The world has no joy after this!

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *A Street.*

JETTER, CARPENTER.

JETTER. Hist! neighbour, — a word!

CARPENTER. Go your way and be quiet.

JETTER. Only one word. Is there nothing new?

CARPENTER. Nothing, except that we are anew forbidden to speak.

JETTER. How?

CARPENTER. Step here, close to this house. Take heed! Immediately on his arrival, the Duke of Alva published a decree, by which two or three, found conversing together in the streets, are, without trial, declared guilty of high treason.

JETTER. Alas!

CARPENTER. To speak of state affairs is prohibited on pain of perpetual imprisonment.

JETTER. Alas for our liberty!

CARPENTER. And no one, on pain of death, shall censure the measures of government.

JETTER. Alas for our heads!

CARPENTER. And fathers, mothers, children, kindred, friends, and servants are invited, by the promise of large rewards, to disclose what passes in the privacy of our homes, before an expressly appointed tribunal.

JETTER. Let us go home.

CARPENTER. And the obedient are promised that they shall suffer no injury either in person or estate.

JETTER. How gracious! — I felt ill at ease the moment the duke entered the town. Since then it has seemed to me as though the heavens were covered with black crape, which hangs so low that one must stoop down to avoid knocking one's head against it.

CARPENTER. And how do you like his soldiers? They are a different sort of crabs from those we have been used to.

JETTER. Faugh! It gives one the cramp at one's heart to see such a troop march down the street. As straight as tapers, with fixed look, only one step, however many there may be; and when they stand sentinel, and you pass one of them, it seems as though he would look you through and through; and he looks so stiff and morose that you fancy you see a taskmaster at every corner. They offend my sight. Our militia were merry fellows; they took liberties, stood their legs astride, their hats over their ears, they lived and let live! These fellows are like machines with a devil inside them.

CARPENTER. Were such an one to cry "Halt" and to level his musket, think you one would stand?

JETTER. I should fall dead upon the spot.

CARPENTER. Let us go home!

JETTER. No good can come of it. Farewell.

Enter SOEST.

SOEST. Friends! Neighbours!

CARPENTER. Hush! Let us go.

SOEST. Have you heard?

JETTER. Only too much!

SOEST. The regent is gone.

JETTER. Then Heaven help us.

CARPENTER. She was some stay to us.

SOEST. Her departure was sudden and secret. She could not agree with the duke; she has sent word to the nobles that she intends to return. No one believes it, however.

CARPENTER. God pardon the nobles for letting this new yoke be laid upon our necks. They might have prevented it. Our privileges are gone.

JETTER. For heaven's sake not a word about privileges. I already scent an execution; the sun will not come forth; the fogs are rank.

SOEST. Orange, too, is gone.

CARPENTER. Then are we quite deserted.

SOEST. Count Egmont is still here.

JETTER. God be thanked! Strengthen him, all ye saints, to do his utmost; he is the only one who can help us.

Enter VANSEN.

VANSEN. Have I at length found a few brave citizens who have not crept out of sight?

JETTER. Do us the favour to pass on.

VANSEN. You are not civil.

JETTER. This is no time for compliments. Does your back itch again? are your wounds already healed?

VANSEN. Ask a soldier about his wounds! Had I cared for blows, nothing good would have come of me.

JETTER. Matters may grow more serious.

VANSEN. You feel from the gathering storm a pitiful weakness in your limbs it seems.

CARPENTER. Your limbs will soon be in motion elsewhere if you do not keep quiet.

VANSEN. Poor mice! The master of the house procures a new cat, and ye are straight in despair! The difference is very trifling; we shall get on as we did before, only be quiet.

CARPENTER. You are an insolent knave.

VANSEN. Gossip! Let the duke alone. The old cat looks as though he had swallowed devils instead of mice, and could not now digest them. Let him alone, I say; he must eat, drink, and sleep like other men. I am not afraid if we only watch our opportunity. At first he makes quick work of it; by and by, however, he too will find that it is pleasanter to live in the larder, among flitches of bacon, and to rest by night,

than to entrap a few solitary mice in the granary. Go to! I know the stadtholders.

CARPENTER. What such a fellow can say with impunity! Had I said such a thing I should not hold myself safe a moment.

VANSEN. Do not make yourselves uneasy! God in heaven does not trouble himself about you poor worms, much less the regent.

JETTER. Slanderer!

VANSEN. I know some for whom it would be better if, instead of their own high spirits, they had a little tailor's blood in their veins.

CARPENTER. What mean you by that?

VANSEN. Hum! I mean the count.

JETTER. Egmont! What has he to fear?

VANSEN. I'm a poor devil, and could live a whole year round on what he loses in a single night; yet he would do well to give me his revenue for a twelvemonth, to have my head upon his shoulders for one quarter of an hour.

JETTER. You think yourself very clever; yet there is more sense in the hairs of Egmont's head than in your brains.

VANSEN. Perhaps so! Not more shrewdness, however. These gentry are the most apt to deceive themselves. He should be more chary of his confidence.

JETTER. How his tongue wags! Such a gentleman!

VANSEN. Just because he is not a tailor.

JETTER. You audacious scoundrel!

VANSEN. I only wish he had your courage in his limbs for an hour to make him uneasy, and plague and torment him till he were compelled to leave the town.

JETTER. What nonsense you talk; why, he's as safe as a star in heaven.

VANSEN. Have you ever seen one snuff itself out? Off it went!

CARPENTER. Who would dare to meddle with him?

VANSEN. Will you interfere to prevent it? Will you stir up an insurrection if he is arrested?

JETTER. Ah!

VANSEN. Will you risk your ribs for his sake?

SOEST. Eh!

VANSEN. (*mimicking them*) Eh! Oh! Ah! Run through the alphabet in your wonderment. So it is, and so it will remain. Heaven help him!

JETTER. Confound your impudence. Can such a noble, upright man have anything to fear?

VANSEN. In this world the rogue has everywhere the advantage. At the bar, he makes a fool of the judge; on the bench, he takes pleasure in convicting the accused. I have had to copy out a protocol, where the commissary was handsomely rewarded by the court, both with praise and money, because, through his cross-examination, an honest devil, against whom they had a grudge, was made out to be a rogue.

CARPENTER. Why, that again is a downright lie. What can they want to get out of a man if he is innocent?

VANSEN. Oh, you blockhead! When nothing can be worked out of a man by cross-examination they work it into him. Honesty is rash and withal somewhat presumptuous; at first they question quietly enough, and the prisoner, proud of his innocence, as they call it, comes out with much that a sensible man would keep back; then, from these answers the inquisitor proceeds to put new questions, and is on the watch for the slightest contradictions; there he fastens his line; and, let the poor devil lose his self-possession, say too much here or too little there, or, Heaven knows from what whim or other, let him withhold some trifling circumstance, or at any moment give way to fear — then we're on the right track, and I assure you no beggar-woman seeks for rags among the rubbish

with more care than such a fabricator of rogues, from trifling, crooked, disjointed, misplaced, misprinted, and concealed facts and information, acknowledged or denied, endeavours at length to patch up a scarecrow, by means of which he may at least hang his victim in effigy: and the poor devil may thank Heaven if he is in a condition to see himself hanged.

JETTER. He has a ready tongue of his own.

CARPENTER. This may serve well enough with flies. Wasps laugh at your cunning web.

VANSEN. According to the kind of spider. The tall duke, now, has just the look of your garden-spider; not the large-bellied kind — they are less dangerous; but your long-footed, meagre-bodied gentleman, that does not fatten on his diet, and whose threads are slender, indeed, but not the less tenacious.

JETTER. Egmont is knight of the Golden Fleece; who dares lay hands on him? He can be tried only by his peers, by the assembled knights of his Order. Your own foul tongue and evil conscience betray you into this nonsense.

VANSEN. Think you that I wish him ill? I like it well enough. He is an excellent gentleman. He once let off with a sound drubbing some good friends of mine who would else have been hanged. Now take yourselves off! begone, I advise you! Yonder I see the patrol again commencing their round. They do not look as if they would be willing to fraternise with us over a glass. We must wait, and bide our time. I have a couple of nieces and a tapster; if, after enjoying themselves in their company, they are not tamed, they are regular wolves.

SCENE II. — *The Palace of Eulenberg, residence of the* DUKE OF ALVA.

SILVA *and* GOMEZ (*meeting*).

SILVA. Have you executed the duke's commands?

GOMEZ. Punctually. All the day-patrols have received orders to assemble at the appointed time, at the various points that I have indicated. Meanwhile, they march as usual through the town to maintain order. Each is ignorant respecting the movements of the rest, and imagines the command to have reference to himself alone; thus in a moment the cordon can be formed, and all the avenues to the palace occupied. Know you the reason of this command?

SILVA. I am accustomed blindly to obey; and to whom can one more easily render obedience than to the duke, since the event always proves the wisdom of his commands?

GOMEZ. Well! Well! I am not surprised that you are become as reserved and monosyllabic as the duke, since you are obliged to be always about his person; to me, however, who am accustomed to the lighter service of Italy, it seems strange enough. In loyalty and obedience, I am the same old sailor as ever; but I am wont to indulge in gossip and discussion; here you are all silent, and seem as though you knew not how to enjoy yourselves. The duke, methinks, is like a brazen tower without gates, the garrison of which must be furnished with wings. Not long ago I heard him say at the table of a gay, jovial fellow that he was like a bad spirit-shop, with a brandy sign displayed, to allure idlers, vagabonds, and thieves.

SILVA. And has he not brought us hither in silence?

GOMEZ. Nothing can be said against that. Of a truth, we, who witnessed the address with which he led the troops hither out of Italy, have seen something. How he advanced warily through friends and foes; through the French, both royalists and heretics; through the Swiss and their confederates; maintained the strictest discipline, and accomplished with ease, and without the slightest hinderance, a march that was esteemed so perilous! — We have seen and learned something.

SILVA. Here, too! Is not everything as still and quiet as though there had been no disturbance?

GOMEZ. Why, as for that, it was tolerably quiet when we arrived.

SILVA. The provinces have become much more tranquil; if there is any movement now it is only among those who wish to escape; and to them, methinks, the duke will speedily close every outlet.

GOMEZ. This service cannot fail to win for him the favour of the king.

SILVA. And nothing is more expedient for us than to retain his. Should the king come hither, the duke doubtless and all whom he recommends will not go without their reward.

GOMEZ. Do you really believe then that the king will come?

SILVA. So many preparations are made that the report appears highly probable.

GOMEZ. I am not convinced, however.

SILVA. Keep your thoughts to yourself, then. For if it should not be the king's intention to come, it is at least certain that he wishes the rumour to be believed.

Enter FERDINAND.

FERDINAND. Is my father not yet abroad?

SILVA. We are waiting to receive his commands.

FERDINAND. The princes will soon be here.

GOMEZ. Are they expected to-day?

FERDINAND. Orange and Egmont.

GOMEZ. (*aside to* SILVA) A light breaks in upon me.

SILVA. Well, then, say nothing about it.

Enter the DUKE OF ALVA (*as he advances the rest draw back*).

ALVA. Gomez!

GOMEZ. (*steps forward*) My lord!

ALVA. You have distributed the guards and given them your instructions?

GOMEZ. Most accurately. The day-patrols —

ALVA. Enough. Attend in the gallery. Silva will announce to you the moment when you are to draw them together, and to occupy the avenues leading to the palace. The rest you know.

GOMEZ. I do, my lord. [*Exit.*

ALVA. Silva!

SILVA. Here, my lord!

ALVA. I shall require you to manifest to-day all the qualities I have hitherto prized in you: courage, resolve, unswerving execution.

SILVA. I thank you for the opportunity of showing that your old servant is unchanged.

ALVA. The moment the princes enter my cabinet hasten to arrest Egmont's private secretary. You have made all needful preparations for securing the others who are specified?

SILVA. Rely upon us. Their doom, like a well-calculated eclipse, will overtake them with terrible certainty.

ALVA. Have you had them all narrowly watched?

SILVA. All. Egmont especially. He is the only one whose demeanour since your arrival remains unchanged. The livelong day he is now on one horse

and now on another; he invites guests as usual, is merry and entertaining at table, plays at dice, shoots, and at night steals to his mistress. The others, on the contrary, have made a manifest pause in their mode of life; they remain at home, and, from the outward aspect of their houses, you would imagine that there was a sick man within.

ALVA. To work then ere they recover in spite of us.

SILVA. I shall bring them without fail. In obedience to your commands we load them with officious honours; they are alarmed; cautiously, yet anxiously, they tender their thanks, feel that flight would be the most prudent course, yet none venture to adopt it; they hesitate, are unable to work together, while the bond which unites them prevents their acting boldly as individuals. They are anxious to withdraw themselves from suspicion, and thus only render themselves more obnoxious to it. I already contemplate with joy the successful realisation of your scheme.

ALVA. I rejoice only over what is accomplished, and not easily over that; for there ever remains ground for serious and anxious thought. Fortune is capricious; the common, the worthless, she oft-times ennobles, while she dishonours with a contemptible issue the most maturely-considered schemes. Await the arrival of the princes, then order Gomez to occupy the streets, and hasten yourself to arrest Egmont's secretary, and the others who are specified. This done, return, and announce to my son that he may bring me the tidings of the council.

SILVA. I trust this evening I shall dare to appear in your presence. (ALVA *approaches his son, who has hitherto been standing in the gallery.*) I dare not whisper it even to myself, my mind misgives me. The event will, I fear, be different from what he anticipates. I see before me spirits who, still and thoughtful, weigh in ebon scales the doom of princes and of many

thousands. Slowly the beam moves up and down; deeply the judges appear to ponder; at length one scale sinks, the other rises, breathed on by the caprice of destiny, and all is decided. [*Exit.*

ALVA. (*advancing with his son*) How did you find the town?

FERDINAND. All is quiet again. I rode, as for pastime, from street to street. Your well-distributed patrols hold Fear so tightly yoked that she does not venture even to whisper. The town resembles a plain when the lightning's glare announces the impending storm: no bird, no beast is to be seen, that is not stealing to a place of shelter.

ALVA. Has nothing further occurred?

FERDINAND. Egmont, with a few companions, rode into the market-place; we exchanged greetings; he was mounted on an unbroken charger, which excited my admiration, "Let us hasten to break in our steeds," he exclaimed; "we shall need them ere long!" He said that he should see me again to-day; he is coming here at your desire to deliberate with you.

ALVA. He will see you again.

FERDINAND. Among all the knights whom I know here he pleases me the best. I think we shall be friends.

ALVA. You are always rash and inconsiderate. I recognise in you your mother's levity, which threw her unconditionally into my arms. Appearances have already allured you precipitately into many dangerous connections.

FERDINAND. You will find me ever submissive.

ALVA. I pardon this inconsiderate kindness, this heedless gaiety, in consideration of your youthful blood. Only forget not on what mission I am sent, and what part in it I would assign to you.

FERDINAND. Admonish me, and spare me not, when you deem it needful.

ALVA. (*after a pause*) My son!

FERDINAND. Father!

ALVA. The princes will be here anon; Orange and Egmont. It is not mistrust that has withheld me till now from disclosing to you what is about to take place. They will not depart hence.

FERDINAND. What do you purpose?

ALVA. It has been resolved to arrest them. You are astonished! Learn what you have to do; the reasons you shall know when all is accomplished. Time fails now to unfold them. With you alone I wish to deliberate on the weightiest, the most secret matters; a powerful bond holds us linked together; you are dear and precious to me; on you I would bestow everything. Not the habit of obedience alone would I impress upon you; I desire also to implant within your mind the power to realise, to command, to execute; to you I would bequeath a vast inheritance, to the king a most useful servant; I would endow you with the noblest of my possessions, that you may not be ashamed to appear among your brethren.

FERDINAND. How deeply I am indebted to you for this love, which you manifest for me alone, while a whole kingdom stands in fear of you!

ALVA. Now hear what is to be done. As soon as the princes have entered, every avenue to the palace will be guarded. This duty is confided to Gomez. Silva will hasten to arrest Egmont's secretary, together with those whom we hold most in suspicion. You, meanwhile, will take the command of the guards stationed at the gates and in the courts. Above all, take care to occupy the adjoining apartment with the trustiest soldiers. Wait in the gallery till Silva returns, then bring me any unimportant paper, as a signal that his commission is executed. Remain in the antechamber till Orange retires; follow him; I will detain Egmont here as though I had some further

communication to make to him. At the end of the gallery demand Orange's sword, summon the guards, secure promptly the most dangerous man; I meanwhile will seize Egmont here.

FERDINAND. I obey, my father — for the first time with a heavy and an anxious heart.

ALVA. I pardon you; this is the first great day of your life.

Enter SILVA.

SILVA. A courier from Antwerp. Here is Orange's letter. He is not coming.

ALVA. Says the messenger so?

SILVA. No, my own heart tells me.

ALVA. In thee speaks my evil genius. (*After reading the letter he makes a sign to the two, and they retire to the gallery.* ALVA *remains alone in front of the stage.*) He comes not! Till the last moment he delays declaring himself. He dares not to come! So, then, the cautious man, contrary to all expectation, is for once cautious enough to lay aside his wonted caution. The hour moves on. Let the hand travel but a short space over the dial, and a great work is done or lost — irrevocably lost; for the opportunity can never be retrieved, nor can our intention remain concealed. Long had I maturely weighed everything, foreseen even this contingency, and firmly resolved in my own mind what in that case was to be done; and now, when I am called upon to act, I can with difficulty guard my mind from being again distracted by conflicting doubts. Is it expedient to seize the others if he escape me? Shall I delay, and suffer Egmont to elude my grasp, together with his friends, and so many others who now, and perhaps for to-day only, are in my hands? Thus destiny controls even thee — the uncontrollable! How long matured! How well prepared! How great, how admirable the plan! How nearly had hope attained

the goal! And now, at the decisive moment, thou art placed between two evils; as into a lottery thou dost grasp into the dark future; what thou hast drawn remains still unrolled, to thee unknown whether it is a prize or a blank! (*He becomes attentive, like one who hears a noise, and steps to the window.*) 'Tis he! Egmont! Did thy steed bear thee hither so lightly, and started not at the scent of blood, at the spirit with the naked sword who received thee at the gate? Dismount! Lo, now thou hast one foot in the grave! And now both! Aye, caress him, and for the last time stroke his neck for the gallant service he has rendered thee. And for me no choice is left. The delusion in which Egmont ventures here to-day cannot a second time deliver him into my hands! Hark! (FERDINAND *and* SILVA *enter hastily.*) Obey my orders. I swerve not from my purpose. I shall detain Egmont here as best I may till you bring me tidings from Silva. Then remain at hand. Thee, too, fate has robbed of the proud honour of arresting with thine own hand the king's greatest enemy. (*To* SILVA.) Be prompt! (*To* FERDINAND.) Advance to meet him. (ALVA *remains some moments alone, pacing the chamber in silence.*)

Enter EGMONT.

EGMONT. I come to learn the king's commands; to hear what service he demands from our loyalty, which remains eternally devoted to him.

ALVA. He desires above all to hear your counsel.

EGMONT. Upon what subject? Does Orange come also? I thought I should find him here.

ALVA. I regret that he fails us at this important crisis. The king desires your counsel, your opinion as to the best means of tranquillising these states. He trusts, indeed, that you will zealously coöperate with him in quelling these disturbances, and in securing to

these provinces the benefit of complete and permanent order.

EGMONT. You, my lord, should know better than I that tranquillity is already sufficiently restored, and was still more so till the appearance of fresh troops again agitated the public mind, and filled it anew with anxiety and alarm.

ALVA. You seem to intimate that it would have been more advisable if the king had not placed me in a position to interrogate you.

EGMONT. Pardon me! It is not for me to determine whether the king acted advisedly in sending the army hither, whether the might of his royal presence alone would not have operated more powerfully. The army is here, the king is not. But we should be most ungrateful were we to forget what we owe to the regent. Let it be acknowledged! By her prudence and valour, by her judicious use of authority and force, of persuasion and finesse, she pacified the insurgents, and, to the astonishment of the world, succeeded, in the course of a few months, in bringing a rebellious people back to their duty.

ALVA. I deny it not. The insurrection is quelled; and the people appear to be already forced back within the bounds of obedience. But does it not depend upon their caprice alone to overstep these bounds? Who shall prevent them from again breaking loose? Where is the power capable of restraining them? Who will be answerable to us for their future loyalty and submission? Their own good-will is the sole pledge we have.

EGMONT. And is not the good-will of a people the surest, the noblest pledge? By heaven! when can a monarch hold himself more secure, ay, against both foreign and domestic foes, than when all can stand for one, and one for all?

ALVA. You would not have us believe, however that such is the case here at present?

EGMONT. Let the king proclaim a general pardon; he will thus tranquillise the public mind; and it will be seen how speedily loyalty and affection will return when confidence is restored.

ALVA. How! and suffer those who have insulted the majesty of the king, who have violated the sanctuaries of our religion, to go abroad unchallenged! living witnesses that enormous crimes may be perpetrated with impunity!

EGMONT. And ought not a crime of frenzy, of intoxication, to be excused rather than cruelly chastised? Especially when there is the sure hope, nay, more, where there is positive certainty that the evil will never again recur? Would not sovereigns thus be more secure? Are not those monarchs most extolled by the world and by posterity who can pardon, pity, despise an offense against their dignity? Are they not on that account likened to God himself, who is far too exalted to be assailed by every idle blasphemy?

ALVA. And, therefore, should the king contend for the honour of God and of religion, we for the authority of the king. What the supreme power disdains to avert, it is our duty to avenge. Were I to counsel, no guilty person should live to rejoice in his impunity.

EGMONT. Think you that you will be able to reach them all? Do we not daily hear that fear is driving them to and fro, and forcing them out of the land? The more wealthy will escape to other countries with their property, their children, and their friends; while the poor will carry their industrious hands to our neighbours.

ALVA. They will, if they cannot be prevented. It is on this account that the king desires counsel and aid from every prince, zealous coöperation from every stadholder; not merely a description of the present posture of affairs, or conjectures as to what might take place were events suffered to hold on their course

without interruption. To contemplate a mighty evil, to flatter oneself with hope, to trust to time, to strike a blow, like the clown in a play, so as to make a noise and appear to do something, when in fact one would fain do nothing; is not such conduct calculated to awaken a suspicion that those who act thus contemplate with satisfaction a rebellion, which they would not indeed excite, but which they are by no means unwilling to encourage?

EGMONT. (*about to break forth, restrains himself, and after a brief pause, speaks with composure*) Not every design is obvious, and many a man's design is misconstrued. It is widely rumoured, however, that the object which the king has in view is not so much to govern the provinces according to uniform and clearly defined laws, to maintain the majesty of religion, and to give his people universal peace, as unconditionally to subjugate them, to rob them of their ancient rights, to appropriate their possessions, to curtail the fair privileges of the nobles, for whose sake alone they are ready to serve him with life and limb. Religion, it is said, is merely a splendid device, behind which every dangerous design may be contrived with the greater ease; the prostrate crowds adore the sacred symbols pictured there, while behind lurks the fowler ready to ensnare them.

ALVA. This I must hear from you?

EGMONT. I speak not my own sentiments! I but repeat what is loudly rumoured, and uttered now here and now there by great and by humble, by wise men and fools. The Netherlanders fear a double yoke, and who will be surety to them for their liberty?

ALVA. Liberty! A fair word when rightly understood. What liberty would they have? What is the freedom of the most free? To do right! And in that the monarch will not hinder them. No! No! They imagine themselves enslaved when they have not the

power to injure themselves and others. Would it not be better to abdicate at once rather than rule such a people? When the country is threatened by foreign invaders, the burghers, occupied only with their immediate interests, bestow no thought upon the advancing foe, and when the king requires their aid, they quarrel among themselves, and thus, as it were, conspire with the enemy. Far better is it to circumscribe their power, to control and guide them for their good, as children are controlled and guided. Trust me, a people grows neither old nor wise, a people remains always in its infancy.

EGMONT. How rarely does a king attain wisdom! And is it not fit that the many should confide their interests to the many rather than to the one? And not even to the one, but to the few servants of the one, men who have grown old under the eyes of their master. To grow wise, it seems, is the exclusive privilege of these favoured individuals.

ALVA. Perhaps for the very reason that they are not left to themselves.

EGMONT. And therefore they would fain leave no one else to his own guidance. Let them do what they like, however; I have replied to your questions, and I repeat, the measures you propose will never succeed! They cannot succeed! I know my countrymen. They are men worthy to tread God's earth; each complete in himself, a little king, steadfast, active, capable, loyal, attached to ancient customs. It may be difficult to win their confidence, but it is easy to retain it. Firm and unbending! They may be crushed but not subdued.

ALVA. (*who during this speech has looked round several times*) Would you venture to repeat what you have uttered in the king's presence?

EGMONT. It were the worse, if in his presence I were restrained by fear! The better for him and for

his people if he inspired me with confidence, if he encouraged me to give yet freer utterance to my thoughts.

ALVA. What is profitable I can listen to as well as he.

EGMONT. I would say to him — 'Tis easy for the shepherd to drive before him a flock of sheep; the ox draws the plough without opposition; but if you would ride the noble steed, you must study his thoughts, you must require nothing unreasonable, nor unreasonably, from him. The burgher desires to retain his ancient constitution; to be governed by his own countrymen; and why? Because he knows in that case how he shall be ruled, because he can rely upon their disinterestedness, upon their sympathy with his fate.

ALVA. And ought not the regent to be empowered to alter these ancient usages? Should not this constitute his fairest privilege? What is permanent in this world? And shall the constitution of a state alone remain unchanged? Must not every relation alter in the course of time, and, on that very account, an ancient constitution become the source of a thousand evils, because not adapted to the present condition of the people? These ancient rights afford, doubtless, convenient loopholes, through which the crafty and the powerful may creep, and wherein they may lie concealed to the injury of the people and of the entire community; and it is on this account, I fear, that they are held in such high esteem.

EGMONT. And these arbitrary changes, these unlimited encroachments of the supreme power, are they not indications that one will permit himself to do what is forbidden to thousands? The monarch would alone be free, that he may have it in his power to gratify his every wish, to realise his every thought. And though we should confide in him as a good and virtu-

ous sovereign, will he be answerable to us for his successors? That none who come after him shall rule without consideration, without forbearance! And who would deliver us from absolute caprice, should he send hither his servants, his minions, who, without knowledge of the country and its requirements, should govern according to their own good pleasure, meet with no opposition, and know themselves exempt from all responsibility?

ALVA. (*who has meanwhile again looked round*) There is nothing more natural than that a king should choose to retain the power in his own hands, and that he should select as the instruments of his authority those who best understand him, who desire to understand him, and who will unconditionally execute his will.

EGMONT. And just as natural is it that the burgher should prefer being governed by one born and reared in the same land, whose notions of right and wrong are in harmony with his own, and whom he can regard as his brother.

ALVA. And yet the noble, methinks, has shared rather unequally with these brethren of his.

EGMONT. That took place centuries ago, and is now submitted to without envy. But should new men, whose presence is not needed in the country, be sent to enrich themselves a second time at the cost of the nation; should the people see themselves exposed to their bold, unscrupulous rapacity, it would excite a ferment that would not soon be quelled.

ALVA. You utter words to which I ought not to listen; — I, too, am a foreigner.

EGMONT. That they are spoken in your presence is a sufficient proof that they have no reference to you.

ALVA. Be that as it may, I would rather not hear them from you. The king sent me here in the hope that I should obtain the support of the nobles. The king wills, and will have his will obeyed. After pro-

found deliberation, the king at length discerns what course will best promote the welfare of the people; matters cannot be permitted to go on as heretofore; it is the king's intention to limit their power for their own good; if necessary, to force upon them their salvation: to sacrifice the more dangerous burghers in order that the rest may find repose, and enjoy in peace the blessing of a wise government. This is his resolve; this I am commissioned to announce to the nobles; and in his name I require from them advice, not as to the course to be pursued — on that he is resolved — but as to the best means of carrying his purpose into effect.

EGMONT. Your words, alas! justify the fears of the people, the universal fear! The king then has resolved as no sovereign ought to resolve. In order to govern his subjects more easily, he would crush, subvert, nay, ruthlessly destroy, their strength, their spirit, and their self-respect! He would violate the inmost core of their individuality, doubtless with the view of promoting their happiness. He would annihilate them, that they may assume a new, a different form. Oh! if his purpose be good, he is fatally misguided! It is not the king whom we resist; — we but place ourselves in the way of the monarch, who, unhappily, is about to take the first rash step in a wrong direction.

ALVA. Such being your sentiments, it were a vain attempt for us to endeavour to agree. You must, indeed, think poorly of the king, and contemptibly of his counsellors, if you imagine that everything has not already been thought of and maturely weighed. I have no commission a second time to balance conflicting arguments. From these people I demand submission; — and from you, their leaders and princes, I demand counsel and support as pledges of this unconditional duty.

EGMONT. Demand our heads, and your object is attained; to a noble soul it must be indifferent whether he stoop his neck to such a yoke or lay it upon the block. I have spoken much to little purpose. I have agitated the air, but accomplished nothing.

Enter FERDINAND.

FERDINAND. Pardon my intrusion. Here is a letter, the bearer of which urgently demands an answer.

ALVA. Allow me to peruse its contents. (*Steps aside.*)

FERDINAND. (*to* EGMONT) 'Tis a noble steed that your people have brought to carry you away.

EGMONT. I have seen worse. I have had him some time; I think of parting with him. If he pleases you we shall probably soon agree as to the price.

FERDINAND. We will think about it. (ALVA *motions to his son, who retires to the background.*)

EGMONT. Farewell! Allow me to retire; for, by heaven, I know not what more I can say.

ALVA. Fortunately for you, chance prevents you from making a fuller disclosure of your sentiments. You incautiously lay bare the recesses of your heart, and your own lips furnish evidence against you more fatal than could be produced by your bitterest adversary.

EGMONT. This reproach disturbs me not. I know my own heart; I know with what honest zeal I am devoted to the king; I know that my allegiance is more true than that of many who, in his service, seek only to serve themselves. I regret that our discussion should terminate so unsatisfactorily, and trust that, in spite of our opposing views, the service of the king, our master, and the welfare of our country, may speedily unite us; another conference, the presence of the princes who to-day are absent, may, perchance,

in a more propitious moment, accomplish what at present appears impossible. In this hope I take my leave.

ALVA. (*who at the same time makes a sign to* FERDINAND) Hold, Egmont! — Your sword! — (*The centre door opens and discloses the gallery, which is occupied with guards, who remain motionless.*)

EGMONT. (*after a pause of astonishment*) This was the intention? For this thou hast summoned me? (*Grasping his sword as if to defend himself.*) Am I then weaponless?

ALVA. The king commands. Thou art my prisoner. (*At the same time guards enter from both sides.*)

EGMONT. (*after a pause*) The king? — Orange! Orange! (*After a pause, resigning his sword.*) Take it! It has been employed far oftener in defending the cause of my king than in protecting this breast. (*He retires by the centre door, followed by the guard and* ALVA'S *son.* ALVA *remains standing while the curtain falls.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *A Street. Twilight.*

CLARA, BRACKENBURG, BURGHERS.

BRACKENBURG. Dearest, for heaven's sake, what wouldst thou do?

CLARA. Come with me, Brackenburg! Thou canst not know the people, we are certain to rescue him; for what can equal their love for him? Each feels, I could swear it, the burning desire to deliver him, to avert danger from a life so precious, and to restore freedom to the most free. Come! A voice only is wanting to call them together. In their souls the memory is still fresh of all they owe him, and well

they know that his mighty arm alone shields them from destruction. For his sake, for their own sake, they must peril everything. And what do we peril? At most our lives, which, if he perish, are not worth preserving.

BRACKENBURG. Unhappy girl! Thou seest not the power that holds us fettered as with bands of iron.

CLARA. To me it does not appear invincible. Let us not lose time in idle words. Here comes some of our old, honest, valiant burghers! Hark ye, friends! Neighbours! Hark! — Say, how fares it with Egmont?

CARPENTER. What does the girl want? Tell her to hold her peace.

CLARA. Step nearer, that we may speak low, till we are united and more strong. Not a moment is to be lost. Audacious tyranny, that dared to fetter him, already lifts the dagger against his life. Oh, my friends! With the advancing twilight my anxiety grows more intense. I dread this night. Come! Let us disperse; let us hasten from quarter to quarter, and call out the burghers. Let every one grasp his ancient weapons. In the market-place we meet again, and every one will be carried onward by our gathering stream. The enemy will see themselves surrounded, overwhelmed, and be compelled to yield. How can a handful of slaves resist us? And he will return among us, he will see himself rescued, and can for once thank us, us, who are already so deeply in his debt. He will behold, perchance, ay, doubtless, he will again behold the morn's red dawn in the free heavens.

CARPENTER. What ails thee, maiden?

CLARA. Can ye misunderstand me? I speak of the count! I speak of Egmont!

JETTER. Speak not the name! 'tis deadly.

CLARA. Not speak his name? How? Not Egmont's name? Is it not on every tongue? Where

stands it not inscribed? Often have I read it emblazoned with all its letters among these stars. Not utter it? What mean ye? Friends! good, kind neighbours, ye are dreaming; collect yourselves. Gaze not upon me with those fixed and anxious looks! Cast not such timid glances on every side! I but give utterance to the wish of all. Is not my voice the voice of your own hearts? Who, in this fearful night, ere he seeks his restless couch, but on bended knee will, in earnest prayer, seek to wrest his life as a cherished boon from heaven? Ask each other! Let each ask his own heart! And who but exclaims with me, — "Egmont's liberty, or death!"

JETTER. God help us! This is a sad business.

CLARA. Stay! Stay! Shrink not away at the sound of his name, to meet whom ye were wont to press forward so joyously! — When rumour announced his approach, when the cry arose, "Egmont comes! He comes from Ghent!" — then happy, indeed, were those citizens who dwelt in the streets through which he was to pass. And when the neighing of his steed was heard, did not every one throw aside his work while a ray of hope and joy, like a sunbeam from his countenance, stole over the toil-worn faces that peered from every window? Then, as ye stood in the doorways, ye would lift up your children in your arms, and, pointing to him, exclaim: "See, that is Egmont, he who towers above the rest! 'Tis from him that ye must look for better times than those your poor fathers have known." Let not your children inquire at some future day, "Where is he? Where are the better times ye promised us?" — Thus we waste the time in idle words! do nothing, — betray him.

SOEST. Shame on thee, Brackenburg! Let her not run on thus! Prevent the mischief!

BRACKENBURG. Dear Clara! Let us go! What will your mother say? Perchance —

CLARA. Thinkest thou I am a child, or frantic? What avails perchance? —With no vain hope canst thou hide from me this dreadful certainty. . . . Ye shall hear me and ye will: for I see it, ye are overwhelmed, ye cannot hearken to the voice of your own hearts. Through the present peril cast but one glance into the past, — the recent past. Send your thoughts forward into the future. Could ye live, would ye live, were he to perish? With him expires the last breath of freedom. What was he not to you? For whose sake did he expose himself to the direst perils? His blood flowed, his wounds were healed for you alone. The mighty spirit that upheld you all a dungeon now confines, while the horrors of secret murder are hovering around. Perhaps he thinks of you — perhaps he hopes in you, — he who has been accustomed only to grant favours to others and to fulfil their prayers.

CARPENTER. Come, gossip.

CLARA. I have neither the arms nor the vigour of a man; but I have that which ye all lack — courage and contempt of danger. Oh, that my breath could kindle your souls! That, pressing you to this bosom, I could arouse and animate you! Come! I will march in your midst! — As a waving banner, though weaponless, leads on a gallant army of warriors, so shall my spirit hover, like a flame, over your ranks, while love and courage shall unite the dispersed and wavering multitude into a terrible host.

JETTER. Take her away; I pity her, poor thing!

[*Exeunt* BURGHERS.

BRACKENBURG. Clara! Seest thou not where we are?

CLARA. Where! Under the dome of heaven, which has so often seemed to arch itself more gloriously as the noble Egmont passed beneath it. From these windows I have seen them look forth, four or five heads one above the other; at these doors the cowards have

stood, bowing and scraping, if he but chanced to look down upon them! Oh, how dear they were to me when they honoured him. Had he been a tyrant they might have turned with indifference from his fall! But they loved him! Oh, ye hands so prompt to wave caps in his honour, can ye not grasp a sword? Brackenburg, and we? — do we chide them? These arms that have so often embraced him, what do they for him now? Stratagem has accomplished so much in the world. Thou knowest the ancient castle, every passage, every secret way. Nothing is impossible, — suggest some plan —

BRACKENBURG. That we might go home!

CLARA. Well!

BRACKENBURG. There, at the corner, I see Alva's guard; let the voice of reason penetrate to thy heart! Dost thou deem me a coward? Dost thou doubt that for thy sake I would peril my life? Here we are both mad, I as well as thou. Dost thou not perceive that thy scheme is impracticable? Oh, be calm! Thou art beside thyself.

CLARA. Beside myself! Horrible! You, Brackenburg, are beside yourself. When you hailed the hero with loud acclaim, called him your friend, your hope, your refuge, shouted vivats as he passed; — then I stood in my corner, half opened the window, concealed myself while I listened, and my heart beat higher than yours who greeted him so loudly. Now it again beats higher! In the hour of peril you conceal yourselves, deny him, and feel not, that if he perish, you are lost.

BRACKENBURG. Come home!

CLARA. Home?

BRACKENBURG. Recollect thyself! Look around thee! These are the streets in which thou wert wont to appear only on the Sabbath-day, when thou didst walk modestly to church; where, over-decorous perhaps thou wert displeased if I but joined thee with a kindly

greeting. And now thou dost stand, speak, and act before the eyes of the whole world. Recollect thyself, love! How can this avail us?

CLARA. Home! Yes, I remember. Come, Brackenburg, let us go home! Knowest thou where my home lies? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — *A Prison.*

Lighted by a lamp, a couch in the background.

EGMONT. (*alone*) Old friend! Ever faithful sleep, dost thou, too, forsake me like my other friends? How thou wert wont of yore to descend unsought upon my free brow, cooling my temples as with a myrtle wreath of love! Amidst the din of battle, on the waves of life, I rested in thine arms, breathing lightly as a growing boy. When tempests whistled through the leaves and boughs, when the summits of the lofty trees swung creaking in the blast, the inmost core of my heart remained unmoved. What agitates thee now? What shakes thy firm and steadfast mind? I feel it; 'tis the sound of the murderous axe gnawing at thy root. Yet I stand erect, but an inward shudder runs through my frame. Yes, it prevails, this treacherous power; it undermines the firm, the lofty stem, and ere the bark withers, thy verdant crown falls crashing to the earth.

Yet wherefore now, thou who hast so often chased the weightiest cares like bubbles from thy brow, wherefore canst thou not dissipate this dire foreboding which incessantly haunts thee in a thousand different shapes? Since when hast thou trembled at the approach of death, amid whose varying forms thou wert wont calmly to dwell, as with the other shapes of this familiar earth? But 'tis not he, the sudden foe, to encounter whom the sound bosom emulously pants;

— 'tis the dungeon, emblem of the grave, revolting alike to the hero and the coward. How intolerable I used to feel it, in the stately hall, girt round by gloomy walls, when, seated on my cushioned chair in the solemn assembly of the princes, questions which scarcely required deliberation were overlaid with endless discussions, while the rafters of the ceiling seemed to stifle and oppress me. Then I would hurry forth as soon as possible, fling myself upon my horse with deep-drawn breath, and away to the wide champaign, man's natural element, where, exhaling from the earth, nature's richest treasures are poured forth around us, while, from the wide heavens, the stars shed down their blessings through the still air; where, like earth-born giants, we spring aloft, invigorated by our mother's touch; where our entire humanity and our human desires throb in every vein; where the desire to press forward, to vanquish, to snatch, to use his clenched fist, to possess, to conquer, glows through the soul of the young hunter; where the warrior, with rapid stride, assumes his inborn right to dominion over the world, and, with terrible liberty, sweeps like a desolating hail-storm over field and grove, knowing no boundaries traced by the hand of man.

Thou art but a shadow, a dream of the happiness I so long possessed; where has treacherous Fate conducted thee? Did she deny thee to meet the rapid stroke of never-shunned death in the open face of day only to prepare for thee a foretaste of the grave, in the midst of this loathsome corruption? How revoltingly its rank odour exhales from these damp stones! Life stagnates, and my foot shrinks from the couch as from the grave.

O care, care! Thou who dost begin prematurely the work of murder, forbear; — since when has Egmont been alone, so utterly alone in the world? 'Tis doubt renders thee insensible, not happiness. The justice of

the king, in which through life thou hast confided, the friendship of the regent, which, thou may'st confess it, was akin to love, — have these suddenly vanished, like a meteor of the night, and left thee alone upon thy gloomy path? Will not Orange, at the head of thy friends, contrive some daring scheme? Will not the people assemble, and with gathering might attempt the rescue of their faithful friend?

Ye walls, which thus gird me round, separate me not from the well-intentioned zeal of so many kindly souls. And may the courage with which my glance was wont to inspire them now return again from their hearts to mine. Yes! they assemble in thousands! they come! they stand beside me! their pious wish rises urgently to heaven, and implores a miracle; and if no angel stoops for my deliverance, I see them grasp eagerly their lance and sword. The gates are forced, the bolts are riven, the walls fall beneath their conquering hands, and Egmont advances, joyously, to hail the freedom of the rising morn. How many well-known faces receive me with loud acclaim! O Clara! wert thou a man I should see thee here the very first, and thank thee for that which it is galling to owe even to a king — liberty.

Scene III. — *Clara's House.*

Clara. (*enters from her chamber with a lamp and a glass of water; she places the glass upon the table and steps to the window*) Brackenburg, is it you? What noise was that? No one yet? No one! I will set the lamp in the window, that he may see that I am still awake, that I still watch for him. He promised me tidings. Tidings? horrible certainty! — Egmont condemned! — what tribunal has the right to summon him? — And they dare to condemn him! — Does the

king condemn him, or the duke? And the regent withdraws herself! Orange hesitates, and all his friends? — Is this the world, of whose fickleness and treachery I have heard so much, and as yet experienced nothing? Is this the world? — Who could be so base as to bear malice against one so dear? Could villainy itself be audacious enough to overwhelm with sudden destruction the object of a nation's homage? Yet so it is — it is — O Egmont, I held thee safe before God and man, safe as in my arms! What was I to thee? Thou hast called me thine, my whole being was devoted to thee. What am I now? In vain I stretch out my hand to the toils that environ thee. Thou helpless and I free! — Here is the key that unlocks my chamber door. My going out and my coming in depend upon my own caprice; yet, alas, to aid thee I am powerless! — Oh, bind me that I may not despair; hurl me into the deepest dungeon, that I may dash my head against the damp walls, groan for freedom, and dream how I would rescue him if fetters did not hold me bound. — Now I am free, and in freedom lies the anguish of impotence. — Conscious of my own existence, yet unable to stir a limb in his behalf, alas! even this insignificant portion of thy being, thy Clara, is, like thee, a captive, and, separated from thee, consumes her expiring energies in the agonies of death. — I hear a stealthy step, — a cough — Brackenburg, — 'tis he! — Kind, unhappy man, thy destiny remains ever the same; thy love opens to thee the door at night, alas! to what a doleful meeting. (*Enter* BRACKENBURG.) Thou comest so pale, so terrified! Brackenburg! What is it?

BRACKENBURG. I have sought thee through perils and circuitous paths. The principal streets are occupied with troops; — through lanes and byways have I stolen to thee!

CLARA. Tell me, how is it?

BRACKENBURG. (*seating himself*) O Clara, let me weep. I loved him not. He was the rich man who lured to better pasture the poor man's solitary lamb. I have never cursed him. God has created me with a true and tender heart. My life was consumed in anguish, and each day I hoped would end my misery.

CLARA. Let that be forgotten, Brackenburg! Forget thyself. Speak to me of him! Is it true? Is he condemned?

BRACKENBURG. He is! I know it.

CLARA. And still lives?

BRACKENBURG. Yes, he still lives.

CLARA. How canst thou be sure of that? Tyranny murders the hero in the night! His blood flows concealed from every eye. The people, stunned and bewildered, lie buried in sleep, dream of deliverance, dream of the fulfilment of their impotent wishes, while, indignant at our supineness, his spirit abandons the world. He is no more! Deceive me not! deceive not thyself!

BRACKENBURG. No, — he lives! and the Spaniards, alas, are preparing for the people, on whom they are about to trample, a terrible spectacle, in order to crush for ever, by a violent blow, each heart that yet pants for freedom.

CLARA. Proceed! Calmly pronounce my death-warrant also! Near and more near I approach that blessed land, and already from those realms of peace I feel the breath of consolation. Say on.

BRACKENBURG. From casual words, dropped here and there by the guards, I learned that secretly in the market-place they were preparing some terrible spectacle. Through byways and familiar lanes I stole to my cousin's house, and from a back window looked out upon the market-place. Torches waved to and fro, in the hands of a wide circle of Spanish soldiers. I sharpened my unaccustomed sight, and out of the

darkness there arose before me a scaffold, black, spacious and lofty! The sight filled me with horror. Several persons were employed in covering with black cloth such portions of the woodwork as yet remained white and visible. The steps were covered last, also with black; — I saw it all. They seemed preparing for the celebration of some horrible sacrifice. A white crucifix, that shone like silver through the night, was raised on one side. As I gazed, the terrible conviction strengthened in my mind. Scattered torches still gleamed here and there; gradually they flickered and went out. Suddenly the hideous birth of night returned into its mother's womb.

CLARA. Hush, Brackenburg! Be still! Let this veil rest upon my soul. The spectres are vanished; and thou, gentle night, lend thy mantle to the inwardly fermenting earth; she will no longer endure the loathsome burden, shuddering, she rends open her yawning chasms, and with a crash swallows the murderous scaffold. And that God, whom in their rage they have insulted, sends down his angel from on high; at the hallowed touch of the messenger bolts and bars fly back; he pours around our friend a mild radiance, and leads him gently through the night to liberty. My path leads also through the darkness to meet him.

BRACKENBURG. (*detaining her*) My child, whither wouldst thou go? What wouldst thou do?

CLARA. Softly, my friend, lest some one should awake! Lest we should awake ourselves! Knowest thou this phial, Brackenburg? I took it from thee once in jest, when thou, as was thy wont, didst threaten, in thy impatience, to end thy days. And now, my friend —

BRACKENBURG. In the name of all the saints!

CLARA. Thou canst not hinder me. Death is my portion! Grudge me not the quiet and easy death

which thou hadst prepared for thyself. Give me thine hand! At the moment when I unclose that dismal portal through which there is no return, I may tell thee, with this pressure of the hand, how sincerely I have loved, how deeply I have pitied thee. My brother died young; I chose thee to fill his place; thy heart rebelled, thou didst torment thyself and me, demanding, with ever-increasing fervour, that which fate had not destined for thee. Forgive me and farewell! Let me call thee brother. 'Tis a name that embraces many names. Receive, with a true heart, the last fair token of the departing spirit — take this kiss. Death unites all, Brackenburg — us too it will unite!

BRACKENBURG. Let me then die with thee! Share it! oh, share it! There is enough to extinguish two lives!

CLARA. Hold! Thou must live, thou canst live. Support my mother, who, without thee, would be a prey to want. Be to her what I can no longer be; live together, and weep for me. Weep for our country, and for him who could alone have upheld it. The present generation must still endure this bitter woe; vengeance itself could not obliterate it. Poor souls, live on, through this gap in time, which is time no longer. To-day the world suddenly stands still, its course is arrested, and my pulse will beat but for a few minutes longer. Farewell!

BRACKENBURG. Oh, live with us, as we live only for thy sake! In taking thine own life thou wilt take ours also; still live and suffer. We will stand by thee; nothing shall sever us from thy side, and love, with ever-watchful solicitude, shall prepare for thee the sweetest consolation in its loving arms. Be ours! Ours! I dare not say, mine.

CLARA. Hush, Brackenburg! Thou feelest not what chord thou touchest. Where hope appears to thee, I see only despair.

BRACKENBURG. Share hope with the living! Pause on the brink of the precipice, cast one glance into the gulf below, and then look back on us.

CLARA. I have conquered; call me not back to the struggle.

BRACKENBURG. Thou art stunned; enveloped in night, thou seekest the abyss. Every light is not yet extinguished, yet many days!—

CLARA. Alas! Alas! Cruelly thou dost rend the veil from before mine eyes. Yes, the day will dawn! Despite its misty shroud it needs must dawn. Timidly the burgher gazes from his window, night leaves behind an ebon speck; he looks, and the scaffold looms fearfully in the morning light. With reawakened anguish the desecrated image of the Saviour lifts to the Father its imploring eyes. The sun veils his beams, he will not mark the hero's death-hour. Slowly the fingers go their round — one hour strikes after another — hold! Now is the time. The thought of the morning scares me into the grave. (*She goes to the window as if to look out, and drinks secretly.*)

BRACKENBURG. Clara! Clara!

CLARA. (*goes to the table and drinks water*) Here is the remainder. I invite thee not to follow me. Do as thou wilt: farewell. Extinguish this lamp silently and without delay; I am going to rest. Steal quietly away, close the door after thee. Be still! Wake not my mother! Go, save thyself, if thou wouldst not be taken for my murderer. [*Exit.*

BRACKENBURG. She leaves me for the last time as she has ever done. What human soul could conceive how cruelly she lacerates the heart that loves her. She leaves me to myself, leaves me to choose between life and death, and both are alike hateful to me. To die alone! Weep, ye tender souls! Fate has no sadder doom than mine. She shares with me the death-potion, yet sends me from her side! She draws

me after her, yet thrusts me back into life! Oh, Egmont, how enviable a lot falls to thee! She goes before thee! The crown of victory from her hand is thine, she brings all heaven to meet thee! — And shall I follow? Again to stand aloof? To carry the inextinguishable jealousy even to yon distant realms? Earth is no longer a tarrying place for thee, and hell and heaven both offer equal torture. Now welcome to the wretched the dread hand of annihilation. [*Exit.*

[*The scene remains some time unchanged. Music sounds, indicating* CLARA'S *death; the lamp, which* BRACKENBURG *had forgotten to extinguish, flares up once or twice, and then suddenly expires. The scene changes to*

SCENE IV. — *A Prison.*

EGMONT *is discovered sleeping on a couch. A rustling of keys is heard; the door opens; servants enter with torches;* FERDINAND *and* SILVA *follow, accompanied by soldiers;* EGMONT *starts from his sleep.*

EGMONT. Who are ye that thus rudely banish slumber from my eyes? What mean these vague and insolent glances? Why this fearful procession? With what dream of horror come ye to delude my half-awakened soul?

SILVA. The duke sends us to announce your sentence.

EGMONT. Do you also bring the headsman who is to execute it?

SILVA. Listen, and you will know the doom that awaits you.

EGMONT. It is in keeping with the rest of your infamous proceedings. Hatched in night and in night

achieved, so would this audacious act of injustice shroud itself from observation! — Step boldly forth, thou who dost bear the sword concealed beneath thy mantle; here is my head, the freest ever severed by tyranny from the trunk.

SILVA. You err! The righteous judges who have condemned you will not conceal their sentence from the light of day.

EGMONT. Then does their audacity exceed all imagination and belief.

SILVA. (*takes the sentence from an attendant, unfolds it, and reads*) "In the king's name, and invested by his Majesty with authority to judge all his subjects of whatever rank, not excepting the knights of the Golden Fleece, we declare — "

EGMONT. Can the king transfer that authority?

SILVA. "We declare, after a strict and legal investigation, thee, Henry, Count Egmont, Prince of Gaure, guilty of high treason, and pronounce thy sentence: — That at early dawn thou be led from this prison to the market-place, and that there, in sight of the people, and as a warning to all traitors, thou with the sword be brought from life to death. Given at Brussels." (*Date and year so indistinctly read as to be imperfectly heard by the audience.*) "Ferdinand, Duke of Alva, President of the Tribunal of Twelve." Thou knowest now thy doom. Brief time remains for the impending stroke, to arrange thy affairs, and to take leave of thy friends.

[*Exit* SILVA *with followers.* FERDINAND *remains with two torch-bearers. The stage is dimly lighted.*

EGMONT. (*stands for a time as if buried in thought, and allows* SILVA *to retire without looking round. He imagines himself alone, and, on raising his eyes, beholds* ALVA'S *son*) Thou tarriest here? Wouldst thou by thy presence augment my amazement, my horror? Wouldst thou carry to thy father the welcome tidings

that in unmanly fashion I despair. Go! Tell him that he deceives neither the world nor me. At first it will be whispered cautiously behind his back, then spoken more and more loudly, and when at some future day the ambitious man descends from his proud eminence, a thousand voices will proclaim — that 'twas not the welfare of the state, not the honour of the king, not the tranquillity of the provinces, that brought him hither. For his own selfish ends he, the warrior, has counselled war, that in war the value of his services might be enhanced. He has excited this monstrous insurrection that his presence might be deemed necessary in order to quell it. And I fall a victim to his mean hatred, his contemptible envy. Yes, I know it, dying and mortally wounded I may utter it; long has the proud man envied me, long has he meditated and planned my ruin.

Even then, when still young, we played at dice together, and the heaps of gold, one after the other, passed rapidly from his side to mine; he would look on with affected composure, while inwardly consumed with rage, more at my success than at his own loss. Well do I remember the fiery glance, the treacherous pallor that overspread his features, when, at a public festival, we shot for a wager before assembled thousands. He challenged me, and both nations stood by; Spaniards and Netherlanders wagered on either side; I was the victor; his ball missed, mine hit the mark, and the air was rent by acclamations from my friends. His shot now hits me. Tell him that I know this, that I know him, that the world despises every trophy that a paltry spirit erects for itself by base and surreptitious arts. And thou! If it be possible for a son to swerve from the manners of his father, practise shame betimes, while thou art compelled to feel shame for him whom thou wouldst fain revere with thy whole heart.

FERDINAND. I listen without interrupting thee! Thy reproaches fall like blows upon a helmet. I feel the shock, but I am armed. They strike, they wound me not; I am sensible only to the anguish that lacerates my heart. Alas! Alas! Have I lived to witness such a scene? Am I sent hither to behold a spectacle like this?

EGMONT. Dost thou break out into lamentations? What moves, what agitates thee thus? Is it a late remorse at having lent thyself to this infamous conspiracy? Thou art so young, thy exterior is so prepossessing. Thy demeanour towards me was so friendly, so unreserved! So long as I beheld thee, I was reconciled with thy father; and crafty, ay, more crafty than he, thou hast lured me into the toils. Thou art the wretch! The monster! Whoso confides in him does so at his own peril; but who could apprehend danger in trusting thee? Go! Go! rob me not of the few moments that are left to me! Go, that I may collect my thoughts, forget the world, and first of all thee!

FERDINAND. What can I say? I stand and gaze on thee, yet see thee not; I am scarcely conscious of my own existence. Shall I seek to excuse myself? Shall I assure thee that it was not till the last moment that I was made aware of my father's intentions? That I acted as a constrained, a passive instrument of his will? What signifies now the opinion thou mayest entertain of me? Thou art lost; and I, miserable wretch, stand here only to assure thee of it, only to lament thy doom.

EGMONT. What strange voice, what unexpected consolation comes thus to cheer my passage to the grave? Thou, the son of my first, of almost my only enemy, thou dost pity me, thou art not associated with my murderers? Speak! In what light must I regard thee?

FERDINAND. Cruel father! Yes, I recognise thy nature in this command. Thou didst know my heart, my disposition, which thou hast so often censured as the inheritance of a tender-hearted mother. To mould me into thine own likeness thou hast sent me hither. Thou dost compel me to behold this man on the verge of the yawning grave, in the grasp of an arbitrary doom, that I may experience the profoundest anguish; that thus, rendered callous to every fate, I may henceforth meet every event with a heart unmoved.

EGMONT. I am amazed! Be calm! Act, speak like a man.

FERDINAND. Oh, that I were a woman! That they might say — what moves, what agitates thee? Tell me of a greater, a more monstrous crime, make me the spectator of a more direful deed; I will thank thee, I will say: this was nothing.

EGMONT. Thou dost forget thyself. Consider where thou art!

FERDINAND. Let this passion rage, let me give vent to my anguish! I will not seem composed when my whole inner being is convulsed. Thee must I behold here? Thee? It is horrible! Thou understandest me not! How shouldst thou understand me? Egmont! Egmont! (*Falling on his neck.*)

EGMONT. Explain this mystery.

FERDINAND. It is no mystery.

EGMONT. Why art thou moved so deeply by the fate of a stranger?

FERDINAND. Not a stranger! Thou art no stranger to me. Thy name it was that, even from my boyhood, shone before me like a star in heaven! How often have I made inquiries concerning thee, and listened to the story of thy deeds. The youth is the hope of the boy, the man of the youth. Thus didst thou walk before me, ever before me; I saw thee without envy, and followed after, step by step; at length I hoped to

see thee — I saw thee, and my heart flew to thy embrace. I had destined thee for myself, and when I beheld thee, I made choice of thee anew. I hoped now to know thee, to live with thee, to be thy friend, — thy — 'tis over now and I see thee here!

EGMONT. My friend, if it can be any comfort to thee, be assured that the very moment we met my heart was drawn toward thee. Now listen! Let us exchange a few quiet words. Tell me: is it the stern, the settled purpose of thy father to take my life?

FERDINAND. It is.

EGMONT. This sentence is not a mere empty scarecrow, designed to terrify me, to punish me through fear and intimidation, to humiliate me, that he may then raise me again by the royal favour?

FERDINAND. Alas, no! At first I flattered myself with this delusive hope; and even then my heart was filled with grief and anguish to behold thee thus. Thy doom is real! is certain! No, I cannot command myself. Who will counsel, who will aid me to meet the inevitable?

EGMONT. Hearken then to me! If thy heart is impelled so powerfully in my favour, if thou dost abhor the tyranny that holds me fettered, then deliver me! The moments are precious. Thou art the son of the all-powerful, and thou hast power thyself. Let us fly! I know the roads; the means of effecting our escape cannot be unknown to thee. These walls, a few short miles, alone separate me from my friends. Loose these fetters, conduct me to them; be ours. The king, on some future day, will doubtless thank my deliverer. Now he is taken by surprise, or perchance he is ignorant of the whole proceeding. Thy father ventures on this daring step, and majesty, though horror-struck at the deed, must needs sanction the irrevocable. Thou dost deliberate? Oh, contrive for me the way to freedom! Speak; nourish hope in a living soul.

FERDINAND. Cease! Oh, cease! Every word deepens my despair. There is here no outlet, no counsel, no escape. — 'Tis this thought that tortures me, that seizes my heart, and rends it as with talons. I have myself spread the net. I know its firm, inextricable knots; I know that every avenue is barred alike to courage and to stratagem. I feel that I, too, like thyself, like all the rest, am fettered. Think'st thou that I should give way to lamentation if any means of safety remained untried? I have thrown myself at his feet, remonstrated, implored. He has sent me hither, in order to blast in this fatal moment every remnant of joy and happiness that yet survived within my heart.

EGMONT. And is there no deliverance?

FERDINAND. None!

EGMONT. (*stamping his foot*) No deliverance! — Sweet life! Sweet pleasant habitude of existence and of activity! from thee must I part! Not in the tumult of battle, amid the din of arms, the excitement of the fray, dost thou send me a hasty farewell; thine is no hurried leave; thou dost not abridge the moment of separation. Once more let me clasp thy hand, gaze once more into thine eyes, feel with keen emotion thy beauty and thy worth, then resolutely tear myself away, and say: — depart!

FERDINAND. Must I stand by and look passively on; unable to save thee or to give thee aid! What voice avails for lamentation! What heart but must break under the pressure of such anguish?

EGMONT. Be calm!

FERDINAND. Thou canst be calm, thou canst renounce; led on by necessity, thou canst advance to the direful struggle with the courage of a hero. What can I do? What ought I to do? Thou dost conquer thyself and us; thou art the victor; I survive both myself and thee. I have lost my light at the banquet, my

banner on the field. The future lies before me dark, desolate, perplexed.

EGMONT. Young friend, whom, by a strange fatality, at the same moment I both win and lose, who dost feel for me, who dost suffer for me the agonies of death, —look on me; — thou wilt not lose me. If my life was a mirror in which thou didst love to contemplate thyself so be also my death. Men are not together only when in each other's presence; — the distant, the departed, also live for us. I shall live for thee, and for myself I have lived long enough. I have enjoyed each day; each day I have performed, with prompt activity, the duties enjoined by my conscience. Now my life ends, as it might have ended, long, long ago, on the sands of Gravelines. I shall cease to live; but I have lived. My friend, follow in my steps, lead a cheerful and a joyous life, and dread not the approach of death.

FERDINAND. Thou shouldst have saved thyself for us, thou couldst have saved thyself. Thou art the cause of thine own destruction. Often have I listened when able men discoursed concerning thee; foes and friends, they would dispute long as to thy worth; but on one point they were agreed, none ventured to deny, every one confessed, that thou wert treading a dangerous path. How often have I longed to warn thee! Hadst thou then no friends?

EGMONT. I was warned.

FERDINAND. And when I found all these allegations, point for point, in the indictment, together with thy answers, containing much that might serve to palliate thy conduct, but no evidence weighty enough fully to exculpate thee —

EGMONT. No more of this. Man imagines that he directs his life, that he governs his actions, when in fact his existence is irresistibly controlled by his destiny. Let us not dwell upon this subject; these reflec-

tions I can dismiss with ease — not so my apprehensions for these provinces; yet they too will be cared for. Could my blood flow for many, bring peace to my people, how freely should it flow! Alas! This may not be. Yet it ill becomes a man idly to speculate when the power to act is no longer his. If thou canst restrain or guide the fatal power of thy father, do so. Alas, who can? — Farewell!

FERDINAND. I cannot leave thee.

EGMONT. Let me urgently recommend my followers to thy care. I have worthy men in my service; let them not be dispersed, let them not become destitute! How fares it with Richard, my secretary?

FERDINAND. He is gone before thee. They have beheaded him as thy accomplice in high treason.

EGMONT. Poor soul! — Yet one word, and then farewell, I can no more. However powerfully the spirit may be stirred, nature at length irresistibly asserts her rights; and like a child, who, enveloped in a serpent's folds, enjoys refreshing slumber, so the weary one lays himself down to rest before the gates of death, and sleeps soundly, as though a toilsome journey yet lay before him. — One word more, — I know a maiden; thou wilt not despise her because she was mine. Since I can recommend her to thy care, I shall die in peace. Thy soul is noble! in such a man a woman is sure to find a protector. Lives my old Adolphus? Is he free?

FERDINAND. The active old man, who always attended thee on horseback?

EGMONT. The same.

FERDINAND. He lives, he is free.

EGMONT. He knows her dwelling; let him guide thy steps thither, and reward him to his dying day for having shown thee the way to this jewel. — Farewell!

FERDINAND. I cannot leave thee.

EGMONT. (*urging him toward the door*) Farewell!

FERDINAND. Oh, let me linger yet a moment!

EGMONT. No leave-taking, my friend.

[*He accompanies* FERDINAND *to the door, and then tears himself away*; FERDINAND, *overwhelmed with grief, hastily retires.*

EGMONT. Hostile man! Thou didst not think thou would render me this service through thy son. He has been the means of relieving my mind from the pressure of care and sorrow, from fear and every anxious feeling. Gently, yet urgently, nature claims her final tribute. 'Tis past!—'Tis resolved! And the reflections which, in the suspense of last night, kept me wakeful on my couch, now lull my senses to repose with invincible certainty. (*He seats himself upon the couch; music.*) Sweet sleep! Like the purest happiness, thou comest most willingly, uninvited, unsought. Thou dost loosen the knots of earnest thoughts, dost mingle all images of joy and of sorrow; unimpeded the circle of inner harmony flows on, and, wrapped in fond delusion, we sink away and cease to be.

[*He sleeps; music accompanies his slumber. Behind his couch the wall appears to open and discovers a brilliant apparition. Freedom in a celestial garb, surrounded by a glory, reposes on a cloud. Her features are those of* CLARA, *and she inclines towards the sleeping hero. Her countenance betokens compassion, she seems to lament his fate. Quickly she recovers herself, and with an encouraging gesture exhibits the symbols of freedom, the bundle of arrows, with the staff and cap. She encourages him to be of good cheer, and while she signifies to him that his death will secure the freedom of the provinces, she hails him as a conqueror, and extends to him a laurel crown. As the wreath approaches his head,* EGMONT *moves like one asleep, and reclines*

with his face towards her. She holds the wreath suspended over his head; — martial music is heard in the distance; at the first sound the vision disappears. The music grows louder and louder. EGMONT *awakes. The prison is dimly illuminated by the dawn. —His first impulse is to lift his hand to his head; he stands up, and gazes round, his hand still upraised.*

The crown is vanished! Beautiful vision, the light of day has frighted thee! Yes, they revealed themselves to my sight uniting in one radiant form the two sweetest joys of my heart. Divine Liberty borrowed the mien of my beloved one; the lovely maiden arrayed herself in the celestial garb of my friend. In a solemn moment they appeared united, with aspect more earnest than tender. With blood-stained feet the vision approached; the waving folds of her robe also were tinged with blood. It was my blood, and the blood of many brave hearts. No! It shall not be shed in vain! Forward! Brave people! The goddess of liberty leads you on! And as the sea breaks through and destroys the barriers that would oppose its fury, so do ye overwhelm the bulwark of tyranny, and with her impetuous flood sweep it away from the land which it usurps. (*Drums.*)

Hark! Hark! How often has this sound summoned my joyous steps to the field of battle and of victory! How bravely did I tread, with my gallant comrades, the dangerous path of fame! And now from this dungeon I shall go forth to meet a glorious death; I die for freedom, for the cause of which I have lived and fought, and for which I now offer myself up a sorrowing sacrifice. (*The background is occupied by Spanish soldiers with halberts.*)

Yes, lead them on! Close your ranks; ye terrify me not. I am accustomed to stand amid the serried

ranks of war, and environed by the threatening forms of death; to feel, with double zest, the energy of life. (*Drums.*)

The foe closes round on every side! Swords are flashing; courage, friends! Behind are your parents, your wives, your children! (*Pointing to the guard.*)

And these are impelled by the word of their leader, not by their own free will. Protect your homes! And to save those who are most dear to you, be ready to follow my example, and to fall with joy.

[*Drums. As he advances through the guards towards the door in the background the curtain falls. The music joins in, and the scene closes with a symphony of victory.*

The Wayward Lover

A Pastoral Drama in Verse and in One Act

Translated by Edgar A. Bowring, C. B.

This little drama was written in the years 1767 and 1768, whilst Goethe, at the age of eighteen, was still a student at Leipsic. It commemorates his attachment to Katarina Schönkopf, the circumstances of which are illustrated by the characters of Eridon and Amina.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

EGLE.
AMINA.
ERIDON.
LAMON.

The Wayward Lover

SCENE I.

AMINA *and* EGLE *are sitting on one side of the theatre making garlands.* LAMON *enters, bringing a basket of flowers.*

LAMON (*putting down the basket*).

I've brought more flowers.

EGLE.

Oh, thanks!

LAMON.

How fair they are! Just see!
This pink is thine.

EGLE.

The rose? —

LAMON.

Dear child, that's not for thee!
Amina shall to-day receive this floweret fair;
I think a rose looks best contrasted with black hair.

EGLE.

And this thou callest polite, obliging in a lover?

LAMON.

For one who loves, thou'rt slow my nature to discover.
I'm perfectly aware thou lovest only me,
And my true heart in turn will ever beat for thee;
Thou knowest it. Yet thou seekest still stronger chains than these?
Is it so wrong to think that other maids can please?
I let thee say that youth is handsome, this one charming,
Or full of wit, and I see nothing there alarming,
But say so too.

EGLE.

Ne'er lose thy temper, nor will I.
Both make the same mistake. To words of flattery
Oft listen I well pleased; soft words dost thou address,
When I'm not there to hear, to many a shepherdess.
The heart should never deem a little jesting hard;
'Gainst fickleness a mind that's cheerful is a guard.
I'm subject less than thou to jealousy's dominion.

(*To* AMINA.)

Thou smilest at us? Say, dear friend, what's thy opinion?

AMINA.

I've none.

EGLE.

And yet thou knowest I'm happy whilst thou'rt sad.

AMINA.

How so?

EGLE.

How so! Instead of being, like us, glad,
And making all Love's sulks before your laughter fly,

Thy pain begins whene'er thy lover meets thine eye.
I never knew a more unpleasant, selfish creature.
Thou think'st he loves thee. No, I better know his nature;
He sees that thou obeyest. The tyrant loves thee solely
Because thou art a maid who will obey him wholly.

AMINA.

He oft obeys me, too.

EGLE.

To be still more thy master.
Thou watchest all his looks, for fear of some disaster;
The power that in our looks Dame Nature has installed,
Whereby mankind are cowed, and charmingly enthralled,
Hast thou to him transferred, and thou art happy now
If he looks only pleased. With deeply wrinkled brow,
Contracted eyebrows, eyes all wild and dark as night,
And tightly fastened lips, a very charming sight,
Appears he every day, till kisses, tears, harangues,
Disperse each wintry cloud that o'er his forehead hangs.

AMINA.

Thou knowest him not enough, thou never wert his lover;
It is not selfishness that clouds his forehead over.
A whimsical chagrin upon his bosom preys,
And spoils for both of us the finest summer days:
And yet I'm well content that when my voice he hears,
And all my coaxing words, each whim soon disappears.

EGLE.

A mighty bliss, indeed, which one full well might spare!
But name one single joy that he allowed thee e'er.

How throbbed thy breast, whene'er a dance appeared
in view!
Thy lover flies the dance, and takes thee with him, too.
No wonder he can't bear thy presence at a feast;
He hates the very glass touched by thee in the least.
As rivals deems he e'en the birds that chance to please
thee;
How could he happy be, to see another seize thee,
And press thee to his heart, and whisper words of love,
As in the whirling dance before his eyes ye move?

AMINA.

Pray be not so unfair, without the least objection
He let me join this feast, with thee as my protection.

EGLE.

Thou'lt learn the truth soon.

AMINA.

How?

EGLE.

Now, wherefore comes he not?

AMINA.

He little loves the dance.

EGLE.

'Tis nothing but a plot.
If thou returnest well pleased, he'll ask thee in a
trice: —
"You had a happy day?" — "Yes." — "That is very
nice.

You played?" — "At forfeits." — "Ah! was Damon also there?
You danced?" — "Yes, round the tree." — "I fain had seen the pair.
He danced right well? And what reward received the youth?"

AMINA (*smiling*).

Yes.

EGLE.

Smilest thou?

AMINA.

Yes, my friend, that is his tone, in truth. —
More flowers!

LAMON.

The best are these.

AMINA.

It is with joy I see
How he the world doth grudge the slightest look from me;
I in this envy see how deep my lover's love,
And this proud consciousness doth all my pangs remove.

EGLE.

I pity thee, poor child. No hope for thee remains,
Since thou thy misery lovest; thou dost but shake thy chains;
And makest thyself believe 'tis music.

AMINA.

For this bow
One ribbon still I need.

EGLE (*to* LAMON).

A little time ago
Thou stolest one from me, at that last feast in May.

LAMON.

I'll fetch it.

EGLE.

Make good haste; return without delay.

SCENE II.

EGLE, AMINA.

AMINA.

He sets but little store on what his love presented.

EGLE.

With his demeanour I myself am not contented.
For playful signs of love too little careth he,
Which please a feeling heart, however small they be.
And yet believe me, friend, the torment is far less
To be too little loved, than worshipped to excess.
Fidelity I prize; 'tis that alone can give
With certainty true calm, to last us whilst we live.

AMINA.

Ah, friend! indeed a heart thus tender is a prize.
'Tis true he grieves me oft, yet pities he my sighs.
If from his lips a sound of blame or wrath is heard,
I've nothing more to do than speak a kindly word,
And straightway he is changed, his anger disappears,
He even weeps with me, when he observes my tears,
Falls humbly at my feet, and begs me to forgive.

EGLE.

And thou forgivest him?

AMINA.

Yes.

EGLE.

What a way to live!
The lover who offends to go on pardoning ever!
Take pains to win his love, and be rewarded never!

AMINA.

What cannot e'er be changed —

EGLE.

Not changed? 'Twould easy be
To alter him.

AMINA.

How so?

EGLE.

I'll teach the way to thee.
The source of all thy griefs, the discontent oppressive
Of Eridon —

AMINA.

Is what?

EGLE.

Thy tenderness excessive.

AMINA.

I thought my plan would love reciprocal engender.

EGLE.

Thou'rt wrong; be harsh and cold, and thou wilt find
him tender.
Just try this course for once, make him some pain
endure:
A man prefers to strive, he cares not to be sure.
If Eridon should come to spend with thee an hour,
He knows it but too well, thou'rt wholly in his power.
No rival is at hand, with whom to disagree,
He knows thou lovest him far more than he loves thee.
His bliss is far too great, he well deserves our laughter;
As he no pangs e'er feels, he needs must pangs run after.
He sees that in the world thou lovest him alone,
He doubts, because by thee no doubts are ever shown.
So treat him that he'll think thou carest little for him;
He'll storm, indeed, but that will very soon pass o'er
him.
One look from thee will then please more than now a
kiss;
Make him afraid, and he will then soon know true bliss.

AMINA.

Yes, that is very well; but then I'm quite unable
To carry out thy plan.

EGLE.

Thy courage is unstable.
Go, thou art far too weak. Look there!

AMINA.

My Eridon!

EGLE.

I thought so. Ah, my poor child! he comes, and thou
anon
Dost shake with joy: that ne'er will do. To make
him change,

Thou must, when he appears, a calmer mien arrange;
That heaving of thy breast! Thy face, too, all aglow!
And then —

AMINA.

O let me be, Amina loves not so.

Scene III.

ERIDON *advances slowly, with his arms crossed.* AMINA *arises and runs to meet him.* EGLE *continues sitting over her work.*

AMINA (*taking him by the hand*).

My own dear Eridon!

ERIDON (*kissing her hand*).

My darling!

EGLE (*aside*).

Ah, how pleasant!

AMINA.

What flowers! Explain, my friend, who gave thee such a present?

ERIDON.

Who? My own loved one.

AMINA.

What! my gift of yesterday,
As fresh as they were then?

ERIDON.

Whate'er thou givest, say,
Is it not dear to me? But those I gave thee?

AMINA.

Oh,
I in this festal wreath have placed them.

ERIDON.

Be it so!
Love in each young man's heart, and envy in each maid
Wilt thou excite.

EGLE.

Rejoice to find thy love repaid
By such a maiden's love, for which so many vie.

ERIDON.

I cannot happy be to hear so many sigh.

EGLE.

Thou shouldst be; few men's lot with thine could e'er compare.

ERIDON (*to* AMINA).

Now speak about the fête; will Damon, too, be there?

EGLE (*interrupting*).

That he would present be, I heard him say by chance.

ERIDON (*to* AMINA).

My child, and who will be thy partner in the dance?
[*As* AMINA *does not answer he turns to* EGLE.
Take care to choose for her the one she holds most dear.

AMINA.

That cannot be, my friend, since thou wilt not be near!

EGLE.

Now, hear me, Eridon, I cannot bear it more,
Strange pleasure is it thus to plague Amina sore.
Forsake her if thou thinkest that she's no longer true,
But if thou thinkest she loves, this course no more pursue.

ERIDON.

I never plague her.

EGLE.

No? How strange are all thy measures
From jealousy to cast a gloom upon her pleasures,
To doubt, although the fact is known to thee full clearly,
If she —

ERIDON.

Wilt thou be bail that she doth love me dearly?

AMINA.

I love thee not?

ERIDON.

What proof hast thou at thy command?
Who let bold Damon steal a nosegay from her hand?
Who took that ribbon fair which youthful Thirsis brought?

AMINA.

My Eridon! —

ERIDON.

All this was not a dream, methought.
And what was their reward? Thou kisses canst bestow!

AMINA.

Canst thou not, dearest, too?

EGLE.

Oh, peace, he'll nothing know!
Whate'er there was to say thou said'st it o'er and o'er.
He listens for a time, and then complains once more.
And what's the use? If thou his charges shouldst disclaim,
He'll go away in peace, and next time do the same.

ERIDON.

With justice, too, perchance.

AMINA.

What! I unfaithful? oh,
Amina false, my friend? Dost thou believe it?

ERIDON.

No!
I cannot, will not.

AMINA.

Say, in all my life did I
E'er give occasion?

ERIDON.

Thou dost oft a cause supply.

AMINA.

When was I faithless?

ERIDON.

Ne'er! Hence all these cares of mine:
Through levity thou err'st, and never by design.

As trifles thou dost hold the things I weighty deem;
The things that vex me most to thee as nothing seem.

EGLE.

Well! If she deems them nought where is the mischief, pray?

ERIDON.

She often asked the same; it vexes me, I say.

EGLE.

What then? Amina ne'er forgets her own position.

ERIDON.

Too much to deem her true, too little for suspicion.

EGLE.

More than a woman's heart e'er loved she loveth thee.

ERIDON.

And dances, pleasures, games, she loves as much as me.

EGLE.

Who cannot this endure should only love our mothers!

AMINA.

Peace, Egle! Eridon, my joy thy language smothers.
Our friends will tell thee how I think of thee all day,
E'en when we're far from thee, and full of mirth and play;
How oft I with chagrin, that spoils my pleasure, cry,
"I wonder where he is!" because thou art not nigh.
If thou believest me not, O come to-day with me,
And settle for thyself if I'm untrue to thee.
I'll dance with thee alone, I'll never leave thy side,

This arm shall cling to thine, this hand in thine abide.
If my behaviour then the least mistrust should wake —

ERIDON.

To keep oneself in check, no proof of love can make.

EGLE.

Behold her falling tears! they're flowing in thy honour;
Ne'er thought I that thy heart so basely looked upon her.
The boundless discontent, incessant and diseased,
Which ever asks for more, the more it is appeased, —
The pride which will not let within thy sight appear
The guileless joys of youth her bosom holds so dear, —
Within thy hateful heart alternately they reign,
Thou heedest not her love, thou heedest not her pain.
She's dear to me, and thou no more shall treat her ill;
To fly thee will be hard; to love thee, harder still.

AMINA (*aside*).

Ah, wherefore must my heart with love be flowing o'er!

ERIDON (*standing still for a moment, and then timidly approaching* AMINA *and taking her hand*).

Amina, dearest child! Canst thou forgive once more?

AMINA.

Have I not granted oft forgiveness full, complete?

ERIDON.

Thou noble, best of hearts, let me before thy feet —

AMINA.

Arise, my Eridon!

EGLE.

Thy many thanks withhold;
What one too warmly feels, will soon again grow cold.

ERIDON.

And all this warmth of heart with which I honour her —

EGLE.

A greater bliss would be, if somewhat less it were.
More calmly would ye live, and all her pain and thine —

ERIDON.

Forgive me once again, more wisdom shall be mine.

AMINA.

Dear Eridon, now go, a nosegay pick for me;
If gathered by thy hand, how charming it will be!

ERIDON.

Thou hast a rose there now!

AMINA.

Her Lamon gave me this.
It suits me well.

ERIDON (*touchily*).

Indeed —

AMINA.

O take it not amiss,
And thou shalt have it, dear.

ERIDON (*embracing her, and kissing her hand*).

I'll bring thee flowers with speed.
[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

AMINA, EGLE. *Presently* LAMON.

EGLE.

O poor, good-hearted child, this plan will ne'er succeed!
The more that it is fed, more hungry grows his pride.
Take heed, 'twill rob thee else of all thou lovest beside.

AMINA.

One care alone I have, lest he should not be true.

EGLE.

How charming! One can see thy love is very new.
'Tis always so at first; when once one's heart is given,
One thinks of nothing else but love from morn till even.
If we, then, at this time a touching novel read,
How greatly this one loved, and that one, true indeed,
That hero soft of heart, so bold when dangers hover,
So mighty in the fight, because he was a lover, —
Our head 'gins whirling round, we deem it our own story.
We fain would wretched be, or covered o'er with glory.
A youthful heart soon takes impressions from a novel;
A loving heart still less inclines on earth to grovel;
And so we long time love, until we find that we,
Instead of being true, were fools to a degree.

AMINA.

Yet that is not my case.

EGLE.

A patient oft will tell
The doctor in a rage that he is sound and well.
Do we believe him? No. Despite his opposition,
His medicine he must take. And that is thy condition.

AMINA.

'Tis true of children, yes; but 'tis not true of me;
Am I a child?

EGLE.

Thou lovest!

AMINA!

Thou, too!

EGLE.

Yes, love as we!
First moderate the storm which hurries thee along!
One can be very calm, although one's love is strong.

LAMON.

Here is the ribbon!

AMINA.

Thanks!

EGLE.

Thou art a laggard wooer!

LAMON.

I was upon the hill when Chloris called me to her,
And made me deck her hat with flowers ere she dismissed me.

EGLE.

And what was thy reward?

LAMON.

Mine? None; she only kissed me.
Whatever one may do, no maiden can afford
To give a greater prize than kisses in reward.

AMINA (*showing* EGLE *the wreath with the loop*).

Is all now right?

EGLE.

Yes, come!

[*She hangs the wreath on* AMINA *so that the loop comes on the right shoulder. In the meantime she talks to* LAMON.

To-day right merry be!

LAMON.

Right noisy be to-day. We feel not half the glee
When we demurely meet, discussing in full quorum
Our loved one's whims, or else the duties of decorum.

EGLE.

Thou'rt very right.

LAMON.

O, yes!

EGLE.

Amina! Sit thou here!

[AMINA *sits down.* EGLE *puts flowers in her hair, while she continues.*

Come, give me back the kiss that Chloris gave thee, dear!

LAMON (*kissing her*).

Most gladly. Here it is.

AMINA.

How very strange ye are!

EGLE.

Were Eridon the same, thou wouldst be happier far.

AMINA.

He ne'er, instead of me, would kiss another maid.

LAMON.

Where is the rose?

EGLE.

When he attempted to upbraid,
She gave it him for peace.

AMINA.

I wish to be polite.

LAMON.

If thou dost pardon him, he'll pardon thee. Quite right!
Yes, each the other plagues in turn, I clearly see.

EGLE.

EGLE (*as a sign that she is ready with the decoration for the head*).

There!

LAMON.

Good!

AMINA.

I wish the flowers were ready now for me
That Eridon should bring.

EGLE.

Do thou await him here.
I'll go and deck myself. Come also, Lamon, dear!
We'll leave thee here alone, but soon be back again.

Scene V.

AMINA (*Presently* ERIDON).

What enviable bliss! Oh, what a tender swain!
How wish I that it but depended upon me
My Eridon content, myself made blest, to see!
Did I not to his hands such influence o'er me give,
Far happier he would be, and I in peace should live.
If to o'ercome this power I seeming coldness try,
At my indifference he'll into fury fly.
I know his wrath, and dread to feel it; thou, my heart,
Wouldst very badly play so difficult a part.
Yet, if thou wouldst succeed as fully as thy friend,
And 'stead of serving him, his will to thine wouldst bend,
To-day's the very time; I never must allow
The chance to pass . . . He comes! My heart, take courage now!

ERIDON (*giving her flowers*).

They're not so very good, my child! pray, pardon me,
I gathered them in haste.

AMINA.

Enough, they are from thee.

ERIDON.

They're not so blooming quite, as those fair roses were
That Damon stole from thee.

AMINA (*placing them in her bosom*).

I'll keep them safely there.
There where thou art enshrined, these flowers should also blow.

ERIDON.

If there alone they're safe —

AMINA.

Hast thou suspicions ? —

ERIDON.

No!
I've none, my child; 'tis fear alone I feel to-day.
The best of hearts forgets, 'midst merry sport and play,
When happy in the dance, and at the noisy fête,
What duty may enjoin, and wisdom may dictate.
Thou may'st perhaps think of me, when in this joyous vein,
Yet thou dost not attempt the freedom to restrain
Which youths allow themselves to practise, bit by bit,
If maidens but in jest a liberty permit.
Their idle pride presumes to treat as love ere long
A pleasant playful mien.

AMINA.

Enough, if they are wrong.
'Tis true that loving sighs pursue me by the score;
Yet thou dost hold my heart, and say, what wouldst thou more ?
Poor fellows! upon me thou mightest let them look;
They think that wonder —

ERIDON.

No, such thoughts I will not brook.
'Tis that that vexes me. Well know I thou art mine;

Yet one of them perchance the same thing may opine,
And gaze upon thine eyes, and think to give a kiss,
And triumph in the thought that he has spoiled my bliss.

AMINA.

Destroy his triumph, then! Beloved one, with me go;
Let them the preference see which thou —

ERIDON.

I thank thee, no!
That sacrifice to claim would show a cruel will;
Thou, child, wouldst be ashamed of one who danced so ill;
I know whom in the dance as partner thou approvest;
The one who dances best, and not the one thou lovest.

AMINA.

That is the truth.

ERIDON (*with restrained irony*).

Ah, yes, I often have regretted
The gifts of Damaris, so light of foot, and petted!
How well he dances!

AMINA.

Yes, none like him in the dance.

ERIDON.

And each maid —

AMINA.

Prizes him —

ERIDON.

Adores him for't!

AMINA.

Perchance.

ERIDON.

Perchance? The devil! Yes!

AMINA.

What mean those strange grimaces?

ERIDON.

Thou askest? Thou'lt drive me mad. Thy conduct a disgrace is!

AMINA.

Mine? Art not thou the cause of my and thy great woe?
Oh, cruel Eridon! How canst thou treat me so?

ERIDON.

I must; I love thee well. 'Tis love that makes me vex thee.
Loved I not thee so much I never should perplex thee.
My feeling, tender heart with ecstasy beats high,
When thy hand presses mine, when on me smiles thine eye.
I thank the gods who give such bliss without alloy,
Yet only I demand that none shall share my joy.

AMINA.

Of what dost thou complain? No others share it now.

ERIDON.

Yet thou endurest them? No hatred feelest thou?

AMINA.

I hate them? Why should I?

ERIDON.

Because they dare to love thee.

AMINA.

A pretty ground!

ERIDON.

I see thou lettest their sighing move thee.
Their feelings thou must spare; and lessened is thy pleasure,
Unless thou —

AMINA.

Eridon's injustice knows no measure!
Does love require that we humanity should shun?
A heart that truly loves, can hate no other one.
This tender feeling ne'er with such base thoughts can dwell,
Never at least with me.

ERIDON.

Thou vindicatest well
The gentle sex's proud and high prerogative,
If twenty blockheads kneel, the twenty to deceive!
To-day's a day when pride may specially enfold thee.
To-day thou'lt many see, who as a goddess hold thee;
Full many a youthful heart will throb for thee right hard;
Remember me, when swarms of fools around thee run;
I am the greatest! Go!

AMINA (*aside*).

Fly, weak heart, he has won.
Ye gods! lives he for nought but to destroy my peace?
Must my distress still last, and never, never cease?
[*To* ERIDON.
The gentle bonds of love thou turnest to a yoke:
A tyrant thou to me, yet I my love invoke!
With tenderness to all thy wrath have I replied,
I ever yield to thee, yet thou'rt not satisfied.
No sacrifice I've spared. Contented ne'er art thou.
My pleasure of to-day thou claimest? Thou hast it now!
[*She takes the wreaths out of her hair and from her shoulder, throws them away, and continues in a restrained calm voice.*
Now say, dear Eridon? Thou lovest me better so,
Than for the feast arrayed? Thine anger now forego.
Thou wilt not look at me? Remains thy heart still hardened?

ERIDON (*falling down before her*).

Amina, thee I love! Be my vile conduct pardoned!
Go to the feast.

AMINA.

My friend, with thee I'd sooner stay;
A loving song will serve to while the time away.

ERIDON.

Dear child, now go!

AMINA.

Go thou, and quickly fetch thy flute

ERIDON.

Thou will'st it?

Scene VI.

AMINA.

He seems sad, yet feels rejoicings mute.
In vain wilt thou on him thy tenderness bestow.
He feels my sacrifice? He little heeds it; no,
He deems it but his due. What wouldst thou, my poor heart?
Thou murmurest in my breast. Deserved I all this smart?
Yes, thou deservest it well! Thou seest he never ceases
To torture thee, and yet thy love for him increases.
I will not bear it more. Hush! Ha, I hear the din
Of music there. My heart doth throb, my foot joins in.
I'll go! My troubled breast my misery proclaims!
How wretched do I feel! My heart with burning flames
Consumes. Off, to the feast! He will not let me move!
Unhappy maiden! See this is the bliss of love!
[*She throws herself on a bank, and weeps; as the others enter, she dries her eyes and rises.*
Alas. they now approach! How can I face their jeers!

Scene VII.

AMINA, EGLE, LAMON.

EGLE.

Make haste! The march begins! Amina! What! In tears?

LAMON (*picking up the wreaths*).

The garlands?

EGLE.

What means this? Who tore them off? Confess!

AMINA.

Myself.

EGLE.

Wilt thou not go?

AMINA.

If he will let me, yes.

EGLE.

If who will let thee? Say, why talk in this mysterious
And unaccustomed tone? Be not so shy and serious!
Is't Eridon?

AMINA.

Yes, he!

EGLE.

I thought that it was so.
Thou fool! and will thy wrongs ne'er make thee wiser grow?
Thou hast a promise made that thou with him wilt stay,
And pass in tears and sighs such a delightful day?
He's flattered, child, when thou for all his whims thus carest.
[*After a pause, whilst she makes signs to* LAMON.
Yet thou far better lookest when thou the garland wearest.

Come, put it on! and hang the other o'er thee thus!
Thou'rt charming now.

[AMINA *stands with downcast eyes, and lets* EGLE *have her way.* EGLE *gives a sign to* LAMON.

But, ah! 'tis fully time for us
To join the march.

LAMON.

Quite right! My dearest child, adieu!

AMINA (*sorrowfully*).

Farewell!

EGLE (*departing*).

Amina! now, wilt thou join us, too?

[AMINA *looks at her sadly and is silent.*

LAMON (*taking* EGLE *by the hand to lead her off*).

O leave her to herself! With spite I'm fit to die;
The charming dance she'll spoil with her perversity!
The dance both right and left, she knows it all by heart;
I fully thought that she would take her proper part.
She'll stop at home now! Come, I've nothing more to say.

EGLE.

Thou dost forego the dance! I pity thee to-day.
He dances well! Good-bye!

[EGLE *seeks to kiss* AMINA. AMINA *falls on her neck, and weeps.*

AMINA.

Complete is my dismay.

EGLE.

Thou weepest.

AMINA.

My saddened heart in brief despairing sinks!
I fain would . . . Eridon, I hate thee now, methinks!

EGLE.

He merits it. But no! A lover who e'er hated?
Love him thou shouldst, nor let thyself be subjugated.
I long have told thee this. Come!

LAMON.

Join the dance with me!

AMINA.

And Eridon?

EGLE.

Now go! I'll stay! He'll yield, thou'lt see,
And join thee. Say, would this afford thee any pleasure?

AMINA.

Immense!

LAMON.

Now come! Dost hear the shawm's soft, dulcet measure?
The charming melody?
[*He takes* AMINA *by the hand, and sings and dances.*

EGLE (*sings*).

If ever a lover with jealousy vile
Annoys thee, complains of a nod or a smile,
Accuses of falsehood or other invention,
Then sing thou, and dance thou, and pay no attention.
[LAMON *carries* AMINA *off with him to the dance.*

AMINA (*as she goes*).

Fail not in thy persuasion!

SCENE VIII

EGLE, *and presently* ERIDON, *with a flute and songs.*

EGLE.

'Tis well! We soon shall see! I long have sought occasion
This shepherd to convert, and make his ways more courtly.
To-day's my wish fulfilled; I'll teach thee manners shortly!
I'll show thee who thou art; and at the least suggestion —
He comes! List, Eridon!

ERIDON.

Where is she?

EGLE.

What a question!
With Lamon yonder, where thou hearest the cornets blow.

ERIDON (*throwing his flute on the ground and tearing the songs*).

Vile infidelity!

EGLE.

Art mad?

ERIDON.

I should be so.[1]

[1] This line in the original contains the only false Alexandrine in the play. — E. A. B.

The hypocrite first tears the garlands from her brow
With smiling face, and says: I will not dance, dear, now!
Did I insist on that? And . . . Oh!
[*He stamps with his foot, and throws the torn songs away.*

EGLE (*in a composed voice*).

Let me inquire
What right hast thou to make her from the dance retire?
Thou wishest that a heart, which with thy love is filled,
Should know no other joys than those by thee instilled?
Dost think all impulses for pleasure are suppressed,
As soon as thoughts of love pervade a maiden's breast?
Enough, if she to thee her dearest hours will give,
On thee, when absent, think, with thee would ever live.
'Tis folly, then, my friend, in grief to make her dwell;
So let her love the dance, and games, and thee, as well.

ERIDON (*dropping his arms and looking up*).

Ah!

EGLE.

Tell me, dost thou deem that any love is shown
By keeping her with thee? 'Tis slavery alone.
Thou comest: at the fête no other she may see;
Thou goest: and forthwith she needs must go with thee;
She lingers: straightway thou dost give her looks unkind;
She follows thee, but oft her heart is left behind.

ERIDON.

Perhaps always!

EGLE.

People hear, when bitter words are said,
There where no freedom is, all joys will soon be dead.
Thus are we made. A child a few words may have sung;
You bid him sing away. He starts and holds his tongue.
If thou her freedom leavest, her love thou'st forfeit ne'er;
If thou behavest too ill, she'll hate thee; so beware!

ERIDON.

She'll hate me?

EGLE.

Rightly too. Then seize a day like this,
And for thyself procure love's tenderness and bliss!
None but a tender heart, by its own glow impelled,
Can constant be, by love incessantly upheld.
Confess now, canst thou tell if any bird is true,
When kept within a cage?

ERIDON.

No!

EGLE.

If, with freedom new,
It flies o'er gardens, fields, and yet to thee returns?

ERIDON.

Quite right, I understand!

EGLE.

What rapture in thee burns,
To see the little thing, which loves thee tenderly,

Its freedom know, and yet the preference give to thee!
And if thy maiden e'er, excited by the dance,
From any fête comes back, and seeks thee, while each glance
Betrays that all her joys imperfect bliss supply,
While thou, her lover, thou, her own one, art not by;
If she will then declare one kiss of thine to be
More than a thousand fêtes: who would not envy thee?

ERIDON (*moved*).

O Egle!

EGLE.

Tremble lest the gods should take amiss
That one so blest as thou so little knows his bliss!
Up! Be contented, friend! Or they'll the tears that flow
From that poor maid avenge.

ERIDON.

Could I accustomed grow,
To see how in the dance her hands so many press,—
While this one ogles her, she looks at that one! Yes,
When I on this reflect, my heart feels like to break!

EGLE.

What nonsense! What a fuss for trifles thou dost make!
There's nothing in a kiss!

ERIDON.

A kiss is nought, say'st thou?

EGLE.

Methinks that in his heart there is some feeling now,
If thus he talks. But say, wilt thou forgive her, friend?
For when thou art displeased, her sorrow knows no end

ERIDON.

Ah, friend!

EGLE (*flatteringly*).

This will not do! Thou also art a lover.
Farewell! [*She takes him by the hand.*
Thou'rt all aglow!

ERIDON.

My blood is boiling over —

EGLE.

With anger still? Enough! Thy pardon now has she.
I'll hasten to her straight. She'll trembling ask for thee;
I'll tell her: he is kind; composure this will give her,
Her heart will softer beat, she'll love thee more than ever. [*She looks at him sentimentally.*
She'll surely seek thee out when ended is the feast,
And by the search itself her love will be increased.
[EGLE *affects still more tenderness, and leans upon his shoulder. He takes her hand and kisses it.*
She'll find thee presently! O what a moment this!
Press her against thy breast and feel thy perfect bliss!
A maid, when dancing, looks more fair, her cheeks are glowing,
Her mouth is wreathed with smiles, her loosened locks are flowing
Over her heaving breast, more tender charms enhance
The beauties of her form, when whirling in the dance;
Her throbbing pulses glow, and as her body sways,
Each nerve appears to thrill and greater life displays.
[*She pretends to feel a tender rapture, and sinks upon his breast, while he places his arm around her waist.*
The bliss of seeing this what rapture can excel?
Thou'lt go not to the fête, and therefore canst not tell.

ERIDON.

Dear friend, upon thy breast I feel it all too well!

[*He falls upon* EGLE'S *neck and kisses her, while she offers no resistance. She then steps back a few paces, and asks in an indifferent tone.*

Lovest thou Amina?

ERIDON.

As myself!

EGLE.

Yet darest thou
To kiss me? Thou shalt pay the penalty, I vow!
Thou faithless man!

ERIDON.

But what dost thou suppose that I —

EGLE.

Yes, I suppose it all. My friend, right tenderly
Thou kissedst me, 'tis true. Therewith I'm well content.
Was my kiss good? No doubt: thy hot lips prove assent,
And ask for more. Poor child! Amina, wert thou here!

ERIDON.

I would she were!

EGLE.

How vain! She'd wretched be, poor dear!

ERIDON.

Ay, she would scold me well! Thou must betray me not.
I've kissed thee, but that kiss will not hurt her a jot;

And if Amina gave me kisses most enchanting,
May I not feel that thine in rapture are not wanting?

EGLE.

Best ask herself.

Scene IX.

Amina, Egle, Eridon.

ERIDON.

Woe's me!

AMINA.

I long to see him so!
My own dear Eridon! 'Twas Egle made me go.
Alas! I broke my word; my friend, I'll go not now.

ERIDON (*aside*).

Wretch that I am!

AMINA.

Thou'rt wroth? thy face avertest thou?

ERIDON (*aside*).

What can I say?

AMINA.

Alas! Is all this anger due
For such a little fault? Thou'rt in the right, 'tis true.
And yet —

EGLE.

O let him go! He gave me such a kiss!
And likes it still.

AMINA.

Kissed thee?

EGLE.

Right tenderly!

AMINA.

Ah, this
Too much is for my heart! Thy love is thus unsteady?
Unhappy I! My friend deserteth me already!
Who kisses other maids, his own will shortly fly.
Ah! since I thee have loved, like this ne'er acted I;
To try to reach my lips, no youth has been so daring;
Even when I forfeits played my kisses have been sparing.
My heart as much as thine is plagued by jealousy,
Yet I'll forgive thee all, if thou wilt turn to me.
And yet, poor heart, in vain art thou so well protected!
No love for me he feels, since he thy wiles suspected.
The mighty advocate for thee in vain doth plead.

ERIDON.

What loving tenderness! How vast my shame, indeed!

AMINA.

My friend, oh, how couldst thou seduce away my lover?

EGLE.

Be comforted, good child! Thy woes will soon be over.
Well know I Eridon, and know that he is true.

AMINA.

And has —

EGLE.

Ay, thou art right, and he has kissed me, too.
I know how it occurred; his fault thou mayest condone.
How deeply he repents!

ERIDON (*falling down before* AMINA).

Amina! O my own!
Oh, blame her! she appeared so pretty when I kissed —
Her mouth was very close, and I could not resist.
Yet, if thou knowest me well, thou pardon must impart;
A little joy like that will not despoil my heart.

EGLE.

Amina, kiss him, since he answers so discreetly!
Despite those little joys, ye love each other sweetly.
[*To* ERIDON.
My friend, thou on thyself must judgment pass this time;
Although she loves the dance, thou see'st that is no crime. [*Mocking him.*
If in the dance a youth her hand may chance to press, —
While this one ogles her, she looks at that one, — yes,
Of even this, thou knowest, thou oughtest not to complain.
I trust that thou wilt ne'er Amina plague again.
Methinks thou'lt with us go.

AMINA.

Come, join the fête.

ERIDON.

I will;
A kiss has been my cure.

EGLE (*to* AMINA).

Thou'lt take that kiss not ill.
Should jealousy again his bosom seek to kindle,

Remind him of that kiss, and 'twill to nothing dwindle. —
And, O ye jealous ones, if maidens plague you e'er,
Recall *your own* false tricks, and blame them, if ye dare.

THE END.

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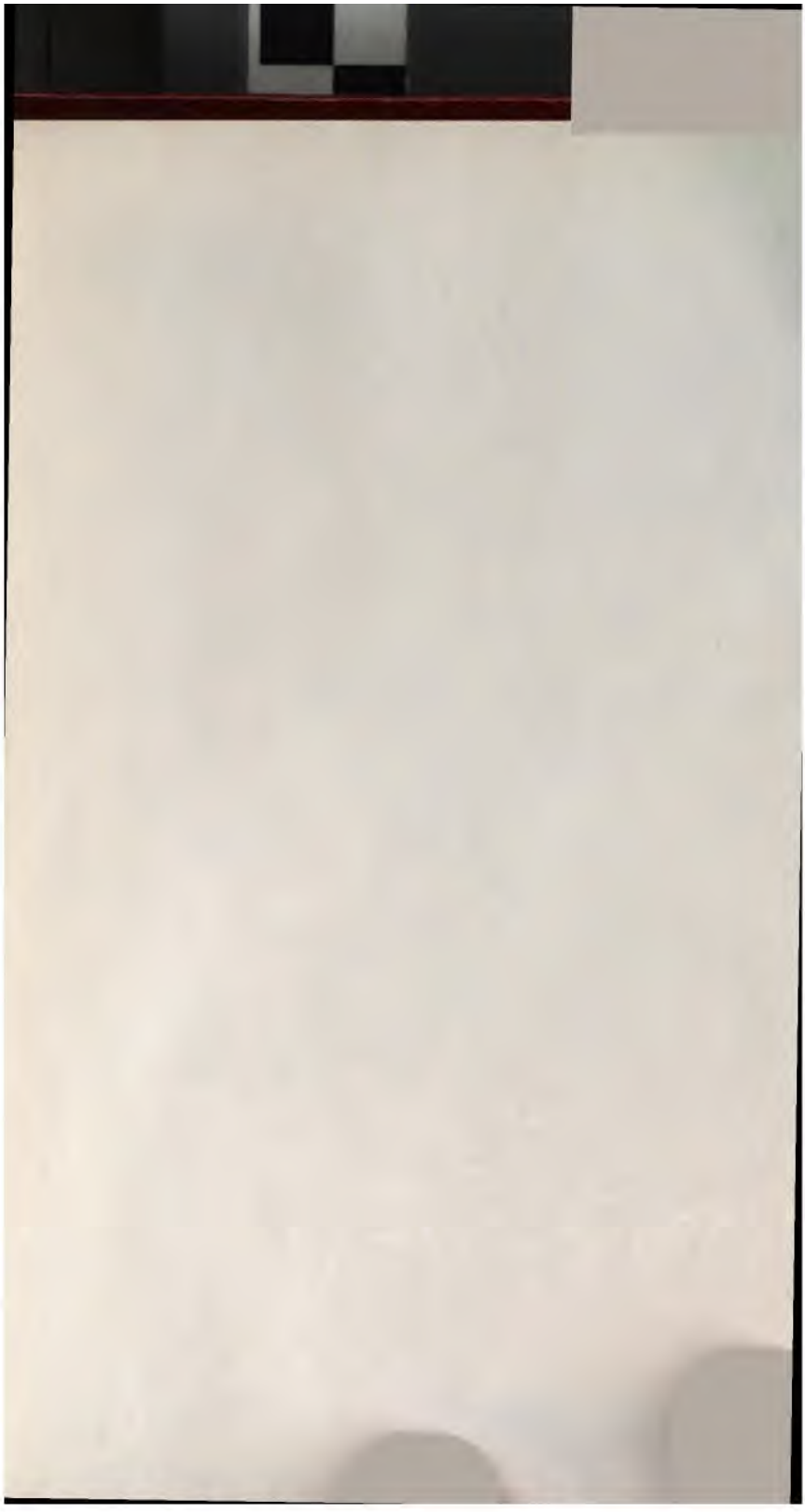

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